

Archipelago

R. A. Lafferty

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*Book One of the
Devil is Dead Trilogy*

R.A. Lafferty



Books of Sand

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Bonus Material

Anamnesis

Of fossils from the recent past
Out of gigantothereous strata
Across a triple-decade vast,
Observe the bones! Regard the data!

Oh dear than the Mastodont!
They lie in ash of fading ember
While sexton-beetles eat and hunt
Lest flesh remain that might remember.

A surging gallimauferie
Of broken reeds upon a charger,
And something of serenity,
And something yet a little larger.

They knew the evolving crock,
They knew a taller star than Vega,
A firster Peter for a rock,
Not yet so empty an Omega.

They gave the Ghostly Thing release
From pink-eyed heretics who bound it.
They sought the ancient Golden Fleece
And, what is better yet, they found it.

Before 'Triumphant' grew a taint,
Before (in catch-words and kerygmies)
Falsetto Chorus raised its plaint,
They never knew the race of pygmies;

Nor guessed the Situation Bit,
Nor found the Lord so dull a lover,
Nor used the love-as-catch-word kit
A multitude of sins to cover.

And some are dead, and some are done,
Or (fallen to heroics fever)
Still oddly seek the All-in-One;
And some are better folks than you are.

—R. A. Lafferty

Chapter One

In A Southern City

1.

All this begins in a southern city and at nine o'clock in the morning, the same hour at which the world was made. It was a Thursday when originally man was not.

Indeed, in these latter days there were few people in the streets and not many in the pubs. But beer was available (barley and hops had been made on the third day), and the morning had a freshness as in the earliest weeks of the world, as the older people remember them. A fast wind was driving the clearing clouds, and the pavements were wet. (When the world was first made it was as though it had just rained.)

The first man in the world was drinking the first beer. He was Finnegan (not in name, but in self), and he looked at himself in the bar mirror. He saw for the first time that first face, and this was his appearance: he had a banana nose, long jumpy muscles along cheek and tempora, and a mouth in motion. He was dark and lean, like a yearling bull. His eyes had a redness that suggested a series of stormy days and nights, were not previous days and nights impossible. He was a little more than half Italian and a little more than half Irish, as was Adam his counterpart in a variant account.

His mind was clear but not of a pattern. He was rootless and renegade. A moment before this, he had been in the Garden. Then he raised his eyes from the drink. The Garden was gone, and he was in the middle of the World. Finnegan looked at the World with new-made eyes, and he doubted that he would ever find a place in it.

But he was not alone. He had a companion named Vincent. Vincent, however, was neither rootless nor renegade. His mind, not so clear not so deep as that of Finnegan, did have a pattern. He had not known the Garden. He was born in the World, and he would always have a place in it.

"*In principio,*" said Finnegan, "*creavit Deus masculum et feminam,* that is to say, God made the first pair a man and a woman."

"But the earliest stories always begin 'There were these two guys in a bar,' " Vincent contradicted. "I'd say it in Latin if I knew how."

"The two versions cannot be reconciled, and I worry about it," Finnegan said. "But, every time the world begins, it does begin with two young men in a pub. All things else are subsequent to this."

Beer before breakfast, and you'll have sudden luck all day. Toohey's, Tooth's, K. B. Lager, the same beers they had in Paradise: it hadn't all been a dream. The boys left the pub but they didn't leave the pubs; there were many of them to visit.

The visiting of them took them all the way through King's Cross and Darlinghurst and down the hill to Down-Town. There is something about the morning buildings and the brightness of trams (trams were made on the fifth day) that stays fresh.

In a longue they met Loy and Margaret, red-headed girls of the city. They didn't remember meeting them. They had already been talking to them.

"We're stewardesses," said Loy. "We have a man in every port."

"Loy has. I haven't," said Margaret.

"In all the major ports," Loy amended. "In one place the camel-drivers wouldn't have anything to do with us. They said that red-headed women were witches. What do you call your dark friend?"

"Red-headed women *are* witches," Vincent insisted. "Him. Not by his name: that's John Solli. We call him Finnegan. You know, like in Duffey's Tavern."

"I miss the reference but I recognize the type," Loy said. "There's a Duffey's in Cork, and one in Port Said, and one in New York. Why don't you take us to the Plaza? It isn't Duffey's, but you could put Duffey's in any of its pockets."

They went to the Plaza. It was a large building and had forty-eight bars though no one person had ever been in all of them. There is one Ladies' Bar that has never known man. There are half a dozen of the bars that have never had a female of any sort. But most were open to all.

Two stories below street level was the railway station with its bars and cafés and supper clubs. One story down were the trams, with lines to the harbor and elsewhere; and there also were the taxi ramps. And the street floor was a multitude of arcades and shops interspersed with bars.

On the upper floors were the special clubs: the Norwegian Seamen's Club, the Dutch Seamen's Club, several English Seamen's Clubs, and a large number of private and social clubs of the city and of the world.

This was the center of town. Less blessed cities have other sorts of centers: government buildings, cultist edifices, even commercial or financial structures. But the Plaza was the center of this city, and here the shimmering people passed pleasurable hours. The bright morning

slid into golden afternoon.

Finnegan phoned Hans to join them there. And Margie phoned Marie. And these ran around together all the rest of the time they were in the city.

2.

They were at the track. The girls had brought them there. When they first mentioned Ranwick, Finnegan thought it was the name of another bar.

"The horses are running backwards," he said, "clockwise instead of counter-clockwise as in the States. Hans will know the reason for this, as for everything."

"No, it's unreasonable," Hans said. "They're running against an elemental. How could they make the same mistake in both hemispheres?"

"What, dear?" Marie asked him.

"The Coriolis, an elemental force. North of the Equator, everything turns clockwise: whirlpools, whirlwinds, the flight of projectiles. An object falling from a height does not fall straight down. It falls in a slight spiral. And people lost in the wilderness wander in clockwise circles, not because the right leg is shorter than the left (they are usually within inches of the same length), but because of Coriolis, the great Earth force. And here South of the Equator everything is reversed, and all things should turn in a counter direction. But in both halves of the world the horses run against the prevailing elemental," Hans complained. "I don't understand it."

This was a fine establishment, the best track that the boys had ever seen. Perhaps twenty thousand people were there. Among them were Tom Shire and Freddy Castle, Aussie soldiers. With these they became friendly. They placed bets: and naturally they all won. They drank beer together, and sat on the green lawn of the infield and watched the ponies stretch and run.

There are several hours not accounted for. Then the races had been over for quite a while. The girls wanted them to finish up drinking and take them to supper.

"Why do all Aussies eat left-handed?" Finnegan asked.

"We do not eat left-handed," Tom Shire explained. "We eat with both hands, just as you do. But you keep changing hands. You hold your knife in your right hand and your fork in your left when you cut your meat. Then you change hands and eat with your fork in your

right. We always keep the knife in the right hand and the fork in the left as they should be."

"It doesn't matter," said Freddy. "Fingers were made before forks."

"They say that," said Hans, "but it isn't so. We have knives, spoons, and forks much older than fingers. While there are no ancient table forks, there are two- and three-tine fish spears, and there are certain un-tined stabbers (the earliest eating forks) that are very ancient. And any archaeologist will tell you that ancient fingers are almost unknown. On clear evidence, forks were made before fingers."

"How can you make forks without fingers?" Loy asked him.

"Make them any way you like. The argument is over unless you can find a finger as old as the earliest fork. We never find old fingers, only jaw bones and brain pans and pelvises. I would never claim that forks were made before pelvises."

"The Italians invented the fork," Finnegan maintained. "We invented them to get olives out of bottles. We also invented the olive. We also invented the bottle."

But Vincent believed that the Irish had invented the bottle.

This was the appearance of the eight as they sat and talked after dinner:

Vincent was handsome within the limitations of the Irish, his face being made out of whatever Irish faces are made from and put together as a sort of joke: the eyebrows not on straight, and the mouth too mobile. But it was a better face than a lot of them and he had fun wearing it.

Hans was a merry-looking kraut, and powerful. If his head were on a platter, Salome would not have lifted it easily. He seemed to read minds with his blue eyes, and he read them better than they were. Strangers, seeing him, sometimes asked each other if he were not somebody important, which was unusual, considering his youth. He was somebody important, but not as they meant it, not presently in name.

Tom Shire was large and fair. Freddy Castle was smaller and with a rusty tinge. Both were unmistakable Australian: if they were dressed in burnouse and desert robe and seen at a distance of a mile dimly through a sand storm, you would still know they were Australian. There is a stamp on these men and it will last forever. If, thirty thousand years from now, the femur of one of them should be found in Turkestan, the professor of the future would be puzzled; but he would recognize it. "What in the bone-bleached world is the femur of an Australian doing here?" he would ask.

Margaret Murphy was like a little girl dressed as a grown-up. She was quiet; she darted her eyes about the group. Loy Larkin was a pink cloud.

There were two ways of looking at Marie: through the eyes of the six; or through the eyes of Hans. To the six she was a chubby girl, with a roguish look, a tart way of talking, a store of private jokes, and the habit of brushing her hair from her eyes with the back of her hand. But Hans already looked at her with other eyes.

Finnegan was at a disadvantage when seen at close range. From a distance, or in dim light, or from behind, he was perfect. He had the lightness and grace of young Mercury, the loose strength and frightening speed of Dionysus before he became puffy with indulgence, the compelling aspect of Prometheus on the morning when he challenged the older cosmos.

But closer inspection revealed him not as an angel, but as a gargoyle. His face was a comic mask with a bugle nose in the middle of it. It was always felt that he would take it off and reveal his true face, but he never did.

His voice, at a slight distance, so as not to be understood, had a ring and rhythm that was almost magical. But, to closer harkening, it also was grotesque: for Finnegan spoke a dialect that was like nothing else ever heard in the world, not even in his home town. There are blocks in New Orleans where they throw more OI sounds than in Brooklyn. There is a waterfront Irish that sounds as if it were made out of old shirt-tails. There are Little Italy lingos that are unintelligible in the next street. There is a shapeless drift of Cajun French come to town that simply amazes the hearer. And there is a form of speech that the mud-cat uses and which is not understood by other catfish. Finnegan's speech was compounded of all of these. And it had something else in it so peculiarly his own that no one who has ever heard it has ever completely recovered from it.

"Yes, we can't understand you, Finn," Margaret said, "but it sure is fun trying."

"A blinking Aussie, and talking about how people talk!" Finnegan objected.

After coffee, Margie and Loy had to catch a train; and Vincent and Finnegan took them to their station.

Tom and Freddy went back to their barracks where the wet canteen was on.

And Hans Schultz and Marie Monaghan went down to a coffee house by the harbor.

3.

They drank coffee for a long time and laced it with brandy.

"I don't know why I so love coffee," said Marie. "All good Aussies should love tea. The English and the Chinese and the Russians drink tea. The Arabs and the Yanks and the South Americans drink coffee. Do you know that Englishmen and the Chinamen are very alike, Hans?"

"I could never tell them apart."

"And the Arabs and the Yanks are nearly as close. They are both Peoples of the Book, though their intellectuals are irreligious. They both distrust alcohol for the wrong reasons. The plainsmen of the lands are similar, and the thugs, and the slum children."

"It was Clement VIII who made a Christian out of coffee," said Hans. "It was considered an infidel drink in Europe till he gave it sanction. And the objections to it were that it was non-alcoholic. It has the social leanings of alcohol but it shirks its responsibility. You can sit and drink it for hours and not have to be carried home; this makes coffee the greater encourager of loitering. How long have you been in this town?"

"A hundred fifty-six years."

"I didn't think you were that old."

"I mean that we Monaghans have been here for a hundred and fifty-six years. The Larkins and Murpheys are old families too. We're the lot of us old Irish. But this has always seemed temporary to me. I thought I'd try to find a husband the next time I'm in Dublin or Cork. Now, though, I may trap you."

She already had. Hans had known it long before she did. Hans knew everything before everyone else, even if it concerned himself.

Salvation Sally came, and after a while she selected them and sat at their table. They were the only ones who contributed when she passed the cup that hung on the end of her hymn-strumming guitar, and she was friendly.

"Jesus is coming," she said.

"He's already been here," said Marie.

"Oh, I mean He's coming again. Will you be ready? I'm Sally. We preach the Second Coming and we give testimony. The harvest is at hand. Coffee, yes, please. You're probably R.C.s since you're flippant, but you're the only ones who've been kind to me. Even the Apostles must have had flippant unbelievers who talked to them kindly and invited them to rest. I bet they weren't so quick to shake that dust off their feet along after sundown when they had no better prospects. No thank you; no brandy in it; it's from the Devil. We avoid all Churches, which are traps; and yours is the deepest trap of them all. You listen to us less than anybody. We know you, but you do not know us."

"Je congois le faulte des Boemes;

Je congois le povoir de Romme," Marie quoted in in-person fashion.

"I have the gift of tongues, of course," said Sally. "We know the power of Rome all right, but I don't think that you understand the heresy of Bohemia. The question is, who are the heretics? You? They? Or we? You know the people who lived on the island?"

"And insisted that their island was the mainland?"

"Yes. Maybe that's you."

Sally was an odd one both in appearance and voice. Often she talked in catchphrases; but she was electric, she was the real thing. They talked a long time. The three of them made commitments to each other to the ends of their lives and beyond.

"It's raining outside, Sally," Marie said when it was late. "Here's my key. Go to my room. The address is on the tab."

"No, Marie. You two are frivolous. I don't want your charity. It would have to be love." (The sound of Sally, the sound of her, like clattering crows.)

"You ARE mixed up, Sally," Marie told her. "Charity is only a Latin word for love. We can love by no other rite. Go to my room and be at home. Leave the door unlocked. I'll be late."

"No. You might come together. There might be immorality."

"We will not come together. We will not have an assignation."

"All right, I will go there. Don't stay out too late. As the Word says, if you can't be good, be careful."

"Sally, you're a poor preacher," Hans told her. "It's 'If you can't be careful, be good.' Only the bad have to be careful."

"I'm afraid that I don't recognize the source of the quote."

"The Wisdom of Finnegan."

"It cannot be canonical. Goodnight Marie. Goodnight, Mr. Schultz. What does she call you?"

"Hanschen."

"Goodnight, Hanschen."

Years later, Hans listened as someone read him a letter from Salvation Sally. He didn't believe it. It was simply incredible till he thought it out. Her words down on paper were just like the words of any other person. But the sound of them, how could that sound come through? And this was after he belonged to Marie and was completely familiar with Australian speech. But the dialect of Sally was beyond that. It was clear off the south end of the stick.

And, Hanschen, what will you do when it's over with?" Marie asked him.

"Ich weiß nicht wass Ich will,

Ich möcht am liebsten sterben—" he versed.

"No, you're too young to die," she said. "I didn't know my Dutchman liked verse."

"It's catching. Finnegan likes verse. He'll quote you Dante till your

ears fall off. And Vincent will recite Corrymeela, and the Downfall of the Gael. And Szymanski likes verse.”

“When I meet him, I’ll know four of the Dirty Five. Then there can be only one surprise left in life. You say he’s in town. You’ll have to find him for me.”

“We will find Casey. But don’t go wandering. You belong to me.”

They talked all night and exchanged childhoods. And childhood in summer in the country is very much alike in New South Wales and in Wisconsin. Then they agreed that one day while they still had time together they would get a couple of horses and ride all day in the country.

The night man did not want to make any more coffee, and the morning man would not be there for an hour. It was still raining, and they walked in the rain till it started to get light. Then they stopped by for mass at St. Mary’s.

4.

After Vincent and Finnegan had taken Loy and Margaret to their train all the bars were closed: a curtain had come down over the town with the night and not a beer was to be had. So they phoned Tom and Freddy at their barracks to talk over the situation.

Thus they became the victims of a dark plot: for Tom and Freddy said that they would meet them, not at their barracks, not in any reasonable place, but on a dim corner two blocks from there and to be reached by a very long circuit. Their briefing was more intricate than for a major campaign.

“Don’t show a light and don’t make a sound,” said Tom. “This has to be done quietly. It’s your life. Here, let Freddy tell you.”

“It’s your life,” came the rusty voice of Freddy Castle through the phone.

Finn and Vincent took the tram as they were told, later walked down an alley, crossed a street, circled back, walked down another alley, and came back a block from the tram stop. They followed instructions carefully.

“Are the boys having us?” Finn asked. “This looks like the runaround.”

“I guess they’re having fun with us, but we’ll wait for them,” Vincent offered.

Tom and Freddy came out of the dark with a couple of big bundles. They signaled for silence, and talked in tones of hushed awe.

“The only place to get beer after hours is at our wet canteen,” said

Tom, "and the catch is that Yanks aren't allowed. T'was a bloody mess the last time a Yank crashed the club."

"Then that lets us out," Vincent said reasonably.

"No. We'll disguise you," said Freddy. They unwrapped winter tunics and digger hats. They did this with some trepidation, for the very cobbles have ears.

"Put these on," said Tom Shire. "Keep the tunics buttoned very tight and the collars turned up. Keep the hats pulled down, and nobody will notice you."

"Judas priest, man, it's a hot night," Vincent protested. "Everyone else is in summers. It's eighty degrees. We'll be conspicuous."

"Never mind," said Freddy. "How could we possibly disguise you in summers? No, this is the only way to pass you in. Now here's a shot to get you in the mood. Raw stuff, what? Makes your eyes water. Let's just rehearse your dialogs a little, and then be on our way for the beers, being mindful always of the danger involved."

"We'd just as soon drink whisky tonight, and beer tomorrow," said Finnegan.

"No," stated Tom Shire. "You like beer, and we're going to get it for you. We simply have to pass you in as Aussies. Vincent, that hair would give you away in a minute. Did you ever see an Aussie wear his hair like that? Fortunately, I have a pair of shears with me."

"All right."

Tom Shire took big good-humored cuts out of Vincent's hair and it piled up on the pavement in quite a heap. Tom was a large good-humored man and he enjoyed doing things like this for people.

"Well, it's not a good job," he said after a bit. "I'd be the last one to say it was a good job. Some of us were just never meant to cut hair. It doesn't make you look any more like an Aussie, but I believe that it does make you look less like a Yank: that's the main thing. We won't tell you what happened to the last Yank who tried to crash our club. Naturally there's a risk; we'd be remiss to minimize it.

"The worst is that Bushmaster is orderly sergeant tonight. It's unfortunate that we have a bunch of sadists in our outfit, but you're likely to find them anywhere. Now then, Finn, forget that stuff you use instead of talk, and speak like an Aussie. Try 'I say, dig, me mate and I need a brace of steins.' "

"Hoy soy, dyg, me moit and oi need a broice of stoins," Finnegan said perfectly.

"That's wonderful," said Tom. "Isn't that wonderful, Freddy? You talk just like an Aussie. Vince, you'd better let Finnegan do all the talking. He has a flair for dialect. Did you ever think of going on the stage, Finn? Here, have a couple of good stiff shots first. Once you really start to sweat under those tunics you'll feel better."

But the tunics were hot, and the boys had been navigating with difficulty for some time. They didn't feel at all better after they'd begun to sweat; it was itchy and sticky under those tunics on a hot summer night. They went clumsily over the back fences so bundled up, traversed a hazard course as difficult as anything they'd ever known in the army. They were torn and a little bloody. Even Tom and Freddy, much lighter clad, had a hard go of it. It was a trial, but they arrived at the barracks and the wet canteen.

Bushmaster was orderly sergeant, and he resembled a gorilla, only larger, meaner, heavier-browed, darker, much more ferocious. "Evening, Yanks, make yourself at home," he said. "I saw you around town today. What're you doing with those hot tunics on?"

Then Bushmaster got a high-sign from Freddy and saw that he had about botched a hoax. It was saved, however. They had underestimated the degree of inebriation of Finn and Vincent. The four friends withdrew for a conference.

"He knows we're Yanks," said the new short-haired Vincent. "He says 'Make yourself at home.' What's all this stuff you were telling us?"

"No, no, he's tricky," said Tom. "He's shooting in the dark. It's a good thing you didn't say anything and let on you really are Yanks or he'd have been at your throats. That rather dark stain on the floor just beyond you, it won't come out. I won't say that's all of the last Yank who crashed here, but it's most of what was left of him. Now just walk up to Sergeant Bushmaster and talk the way we rehearsed it. Go ahead, talk to him, Finnegan. Fool him completely."

The boys had drunk a lot that day. Everything seemed plausible to them now. Finnegan turned his collar up even higher and pulled down the digger hat. It was too large for him and, but for his prominent nose, it would have slipped all the way to his shoulders.

"Hoy soy, cobber, me moits and oi need a clutch of brews," he said bravely.

"You boys members of this outfit?" Sergeant Bushmaster asked.

"Oh yes, me moit and oi, members both."

"There's only twenty-seven men in the outfit and I thought I knew them all," said Bushmaster. "Well, sign your names and take your beer chits."

Finnegan signed. He signed without reading, and he was gilled. It was not a roster he signed. Instead, it was a curious document affirming that Yanks aren't in it at all with Aussies at beer drinking, that Yanks aren't in it with Aussies at any sort of drinking or at anything else. It contained the statement that Yanks are still wet behind the ears, that Yanks eat such and such and do such and such, obscenities boldly spelled out. It was a long document and (though

drawn up in a hurry) it covered nearly everything. Tom Shire had inspired it, but it was written by a scribe of genius.

This is the thing that Finnegan signed, betraying his country. The document is still in the possession of a certain regiment today, in the keeping of an Aussie non-com club whose members are too young to have known Tom Shire and Freddy Castle: but they still cherish the affidavit.

Then Finnegan advanced boldly to get the beers.

"What's that?" the barkeep asked him.

"It's a beer chit. It shows that I can buy beer here. I signed the register and Sergeant Bushmaster gave me a beer chit so I could buy beer."

"I never heard of a beer chit, Yank. You're being took. All you need to buy a beer is a zack."

"I don't even know what a zack is."

"A sixpence."

"You carried it off grandly," said Freddy when Finn had returned with the beers. "There's still great danger, though. The last Yank caught crashing—pitiful case!"

"Pitiful," said Tom Shire.

The four boys took a table against an engine room. It was very hot. There were other tables open, but they were not so well-suited to the special purpose.

"Can't we turn our collars down just a little?" Vincent asked.

"Oh man, it's your lives if you do," Freddy told him. "Keep drinking the stuff as fast as you can, and we'll keep them coming. I always said that if I had to go I'd like to go with the foam of it on my mouth."

After they had had a few rounds of the steins they started on the Imperial Quarts. The Imperial is an Empire within itself. Its thirty-nine ounces have a jolt at the end, and the boys had been visiting the pubs all day. After each had had a pair they were looped and in grave danger of falling asleep.

"Men, men," Freddy warned. "You have to be alert. You can almost feel the threat. I hope you're well disposed of soul for whatever may come."

For Bushmaster was crossing over to them. But big Bushmaster had a failing. Though he was the meanest-looking sergeant in two armies, yet he couldn't stand to see the innocent suffer. And he had a decent man's aversion to seeing a situation milked.

"You might as well take off the heavy stuff and you'll feel better," he said. "Besides, that's my hat you're wearing, Finnegan. It's big enough for you to use it for a poncho but I'd rather you didn't."

"You're done for," Freddy hissed, "but brazen it out. Yoi, your

blood is on our hands. Say something."

"If we take them off," said Finnegan to mighty Bushmaster, "you'll know we're Yanks, and we'll have had it."

"As far as I'm concerned you've had it now," said Bushmaster. "You're toddly, boys; elephant's trunk, and all that. Clear out of your class: I've a three year-old sister who can spot you three and drink you under. I guess Yanks just can't handle the stuff. Ever think of switching to goats' milk?"

"We are drinkers from the word go," said Vincent.

"The word is gone. Are there any Yanks in your bunch who can drink at all?"

"We have the champion, Bush, we have the champion," Vincent maintained.

"I don't know what he could be champion of. I'm the world's heavyweight champion myself. You couldn't get together fifty quid for a bet?"

"A thousand," said Finnegan. "How much is a quid?"

"A pound. And don't be extravagant," said Bushmaster. "Could you get fifty quid and have him face me at the Harbor House at noon tomorrow?"

"Done," said Finnegan. "We cover the bet."

"Dominion rules," said Joe Bushmaster. "Uncapping at high noon. Quart to be drained in twenty minutes. No contest if both do not toss off six in two hours. That's to let you off easy if your man's completely outclassed. And from then on it's for as long as a man can answer the clock and the bottle. Tom and Freddy can officiate. They're trusted by both sides. What's my opponent's name?"

"Schultz. John Schultz."

Bushmaster paled at this, for he knew Hans. But he paused only a moment.

"I'll beat him," he said. "I've beat krauts before."

"You know," said Finnegan as they poured him into a cab, "I hated to give up that digger hat. For a while I felt at home in that hat."

5.

"—but before doing so I asked them severally whether they had any curse on them which forbade them to drink ale in the morning."

—Belloc

It was daylight when Hans got back to the house, and Vincent and Finnegan were asleep. There should be several hours of peace. So he

went to bed, tired and a little boozy from the laced coffee and the long sitting up: pleased with himself, with the world, with the town, with the furlough, and with the queenly Marie Monaghan. It is not often that one has nearly perfect peace with hardly a fly in the ointment.

"And what is wrong with flies in ointment?" Marie seemed to ask in his mind. "Flies like ointment, and ointment is good for flies. Keeps them supple."

They had a date the next day at the Lotus Eaters. That day or the next, he wasn't sure now. But there would be no hurry: you couldn't get there before noon.

"For, as Horace say, in the Land of the Lotus Eaters it is always afternoon." It was Marie talking in his mind again.

"Horace didn't say that," Hans had to protest to her on the same distant mind level.

"My uncle, Horace Higgenbotham, he said that." That's the way Marie talked.

With Marie in the Land of the Lotus Eaters to make time stand still! And this was possibly the place itself, here in the South. This was farther than Ulysses had gone, farther even than Ophir where the men of Solomon and Hiram had spent three years on the trip. This was the farthest spot in the world, the antipodes where all old legends are relegated. This southern land was the natural home of griffins and dragons.

The chrome-colored dragon with the ivory grin broke into a clattering roar as its gullet heaved with insulting clangor, till Hans rose and throttled it with his hands. But his near anger vanished at once, and he smiled and released the alarm lever again. But now it could only go 'tunkle tunkle' weakly.

"You can't wake anybody like that. Sound off like a real clock," Hans told it. Vincent and Finnegan were still asleep. "Damn their black little hearts, did they want to get up early for something?" They took some stirring.

"We wanted to wake up early so we could wake you up," Finnegan said then. "We have you entered in a contest. And we need thirty pounds to make up our bet on you. Do you have thirty pounds?"

"Yes. What is the contest?"

"It's a beer-drinking contest with Joe Bushmaster. It's for the world's heavyweight championship. He's a hundred pounds heavier than you: he's like a gorilla."

"Nobody is a hundred pounds heavier than me, not even Henry. And there isn't one gorilla in five that can drink beer with me."

"We'll meet Tom and Freddy and see how he's training and what the odds are now. I don't see how you have a chance in the world. You sure you have thirty pounds?"

“Oh yes. We'll bet.”

They met Tom and Freddy and had breakfast. Everybody except Hans thought that Hans should have nothing at all to eat or drink. He had steak and eggs, however, and (enough to make your flesh creep, said Vincent) a quart of beer.

“Bushmaster will have nothing to eat or drink until the uncapping,” said Tom Shire. “He had a hard workout last night, and is spending three hours in the gym this morning. He will dry out at least half a stone before contest time.”

But Hans was not convinced. “There's nothing like a pure heart and a crafty mind to win a drinking contest,” he said. “Fortunately I have both.” And, as they walked about town, he entered a pub for another beer.

“Somebody stop that man,” Finn howled. “We'll lose our money and national honor.”

“No. This is the way to train,” said Hans. “You train for boxing by boxing, with the lighter men for speed, with the heavier men for power. I will just spar with a few little glasses of shandygaff for the quickness of it, and then some porter for strength. And then I'll match a couple of heavy drinkers to get in real shape.”

“But the contest is only two hours away,” Vincent objected.

“Then I'll have to train really fast,” Hans resolved.

The barkeep agreed that it was a mistake to go into a contest cold. Casey Szymanski said the same thing. Casey had just joined them. He was the fourth member of the Dirty Five.

“There's a master in Chicago named Melchisedech Duffey who knows more about these things than anyone in the world,” said Casey. “When he lived in the East he used to run in the Celtic Marathon every year. Only he always ran the course once before sun-up to see if he was in shape. He made better times in the pre-dawn races than in the public races. He managed a fighter who always went on a bender the night before a fight and got into a fight of his own. He did this to see if he was in shape to fight.”

“Did he win any fights?” Finnegan asked.

“No. He never won a fight. But he lost all his night-before fights also which proves, not that the theory was wrong, but that the fighter couldn't fight. And after Duffey had managed the fighter, he married a widow who had shot her husband.”

Hans had a beer with Casey then, and the minor partners continued to fret. They went to the Commodore and all had one. Bookies were taking odds on the contest now, and these were running eight to five in favor of Joe Bushmaster. They went to the Wooden Ship. They went to the Green Tree, and to the Old Red Lantern. It was in the Old Red Lantern than Jimmy Hansen caught up with them.

Jimmy was the reporter assigned to cover the contest.

"I'm not a good reporter," he said. "When they mustered me out, I had to walk with a cane so I got this swagger one. Then I thought reporting would be a swagger job to go with it. They've got me for a greenhorn in Crime. This really should be covered by Sports, but Sports is almost always unavailable so early in the day. Besides, this might be more Social Scene than Sports. I fill in for all of them."

The Social Scene shifted to the Binnacle. Stein joined them there. He was an American Sergeant known to the Dirty Fivers.

"Are you Press too?" Jimmy asked him.

"Special Services Press," said Stein. "Why? Are you on a story?"

"Only the greatest thing since the drying of the flood," said Jimmy Hansen. "The world's championship is all. Joe Bushmaster the Lion of the South against Hans Schultz the Milwaukee Seidel. Here is an opportunity for you. Imagine that over the byline A. Stein. What is the A. for?"

"Absalom," said Stein. "I might as well cover it. Is it here?"

"At the Harbor House at high noon. But Hans is trying to get high before noon."

Stein sought out Casey Szymanski. They had a long talk and Casey became very angry. He also was scared: he was always scared after he talked to Stein. This was a mystery. Then they all went to the Harbor House, and Marie Monaghan joined them there. This was looked upon by many with disfavor. A woman should not be in a contestant's corner during a great contest. It distracts. One of the greatest of the old champions went down to defeat when he had a woman in his corner. But for that, and his death, he might still be reigning.

Stein intruded himself as the master of ceremonies. This American Sergeant was somehow in Special Services. He gave lectures in the service clubs and he wrote for the army publications. He moved from outfit to outfit, and he had entrée to peculiar colonels and brigadiers.

But he was competent, and he immediately grasped the essence of Dominion Rules governing beer-drinking contests. There is really little in them that is not covered by common law and common sense. His sharp mind mastered it all in a moment.

There was some shuffling. Bushmaster used the old trick of not appearing till the very last moment, thinking to make his opponent nervous. If Hans was nervous he did not show it. Stein cut through the chatter ruthlessly and got the thing started on time.

He performed the Uncapping with a flourish. The contestants fell to it. Bushmaster drank his quart in two shattering gulps, wiped his huge face with the back of his hand, and slapped the table for another. He looked around and grinned with insulting confidence.

Hans, appearing not to notice his dangerous opponent, drank and

gazed at Marie. The boys wanted Marie to sit where she wouldn't disturb him, but he wanted to be disturbed. Hans was in love. But he also knew his business. He was quietly through the first quart and nearly through the second before Bushmaster noticed.

"What? Is that the second?" Bushmaster asked. "Is it? Are you sure?"

"That is the second, Joseph," said Stein. "The Counters have certified it."

"It's beautiful to see a man drink like that," Vincent needled Bushmaster. "Such perfect pacing, unhurried ease, quiet competence, not like a crude amateur who gulps and gasps."

Hans was through his second and into his third without a break. Bushmaster gulped his second in two more great draughts and took a pull at his third. Already the more perspicacious could see that he was worried.

"What's the time?" he called.

"Nineteen minutes and odd seconds," said Stein. "You're both a lap ahead."

"Watch the spillage," said Bushmaster. "He rocked the crock twice with his elbow."

"We have competent officials here," said Stein. "We have men to watch the spillage. I must caution you, Joseph, when you wipe your mouth with the back of your hand you may be getting rid of significant moisture. The beer is to be drunk, not wiped off. And you judges," (that was Tom and Freddy) "must be careful to differentiate between actual spillage and the ambient moisture settling on the glass and dripping on the table. You must definitely see the spillage. Casey, I loved that phrase of Joseph's about Rocking the Crock. Very apropos to our recent conversation."

Casey looked sulky. Hans was through his third quart and deep into the fourth so quietly that Bushmaster interposed again: "The count? What's the count?"

"Fourth working for Schultz; Third for Bushmaster."

Bushmaster tried to finish his third with one gulp, but failed and fell to coughing.

"Caution," Stein called. "Significant moisture can be lost that way."

Bushmaster finished his third and made a slow start on his fourth. Hans went to the john. He had to be accompanied by a judge and one observer from each side; these received instructions from Stein to be sure that nothing was regurgitated or otherwise orally ejected. Nonetheless, Hans returned greatly refreshed and was into his fifth quart so quickly that stark consternation filled the face of Bushmaster.

There was at this time much activity among the bookmakers. The

odds had shifted to Hans Schultz now, though many said that this was fools' money shifting. Marie was proud.

"My little red-eyed sweetheart," she said, "and his first bout under Dominion Rules!"

Bushmaster went to the john. Returning, he called for a count.

"The sixth working for Schultz. The fourth for Bushmaster."

Bushmaster went through his fourth with a touch of panic, and started the fifth.

"The time? The time?" he demanded.

"One hour and sixteen minutes."

"I hadn't my five minute warning. I was within five minutes of being counted out."

"You were not. Number four was finished in seconds under the hour and fifteen minute mark. No warning was necessary. The officials are adequate. They will see that everything is observed."

A debate had broken out among the Bushmaster backers, whether to gain a little time advantage with one or even two more great gulps, or to emulate Hans and sip.

"If you sip," said the council of the cooler heads, "you're playing the other man's game. You can't play the other man's game and win. Don't change your style. You're a natural gulper. Better to go down gulping than play the other man's game."

"Nobody is going down but that American kraut," said Bushmaster. He killed number five in a draught of full thirty ounces and sat back shaking.

"Time?" he called.

"One hour and thirty-three minutes."

"That finished him," Vincent whispered. "He's scared and he's going to fold. Let me put the needle into him again." Vincent slapped Bushmaster on the back.

"Don't annoy the contestants," Stein ordered.

"Good old Joe," said Vincent. "That's the biggest chug-a-lug I ever saw. You must have downed four-fifths of a quart. I don't imagine there's a man in the world who can down a whole Imperial in one."

"I can," said Bushmaster solidly. "I do it all the time."

"That I would have to see. I don't believe there's a man alive can do it. You're not trying to pull a no-contest and quit before six?"

"I never pulled out in my life. I'll still be enjoying it after you put your red-eyed Yankee to bed." Bushmaster emptied his entire sixth in one long noisy gulp, and even Hans admired. To down an Imperial in one gulp is a feat. Many had heard of it being done at other times and places. Nobody present had ever seen it done before.

It was one hour and fifty-four minutes. It looked now as if Bushmaster had rallied, and the odds had shifted back to him. But the

wiser could see that it was his swan's song, or more properly the gulping of a dying emu.

All three times in the next hour Bushmaster had to have the five minute warning called to him. At three hours and twenty minutes he had to have the ten second warning called. And at three hours and forty minutes one judge held that there was still discernable liquid to be found in his glass. This brought a stern warning from Stein.

At the four hour station he was in with a good two minute margin, but the end was near. And Hans Schultz maintained an easy lead, starting his fifteenth as Bushmaster started his thirteenth.

Bushmaster was game (dead game, said his backers), with the bulldog courage of his forebears, said his backers (some of whom were bulldogs, said Finnegan): but Bushmaster was a sorry-looking oaf now, and at four hours and twenty minutes there was an inch of beer left in his glass and he could not continue.

The large man buried his face in his hands for an instant, and then rose ponderously. Everybody shook hands with everybody, and the money began to be paid and collected.

"And the honor of two nations remains untarnished, but a bit dampened," said Stein.

There was a round for everyone, and in the Harbor House that was an event. Bushmaster took only a small stock glass of porter and he used it slowly as if still stunned by the magnitude of the disaster that had overtaken him.

This had been one of the heroic labors required that one of the Argonauts should do. Had Hans failed, they would all have been destroyed by the furies.

This is hero stuff? This?

Yes, yes. Such were the high feats of the primordial heroes and of the early Irish heroes. Do not be fooled by later classical instances. They are derivative.

The four Dirty Fivers and Marie and Tom and Freddy, went pub-crawling again. They went to the Captain Cook, and to Blarney's, to the Dutchman's, and back to the Commodore. After that they took Hans home to bed, for he was tired. Then the boys went out on the town with Marie.

6.

Hans was in love. He was in love with Marie Monaghan. This had come swiftly to him who usually made up his mind slowly on important things.

Marie might not have seemed exceptional to anyone else. She had regular, nice features, but her hair was too red and her face was too freckled. She was chubby by contemporary standards, though divine by classical. Hans' feelings were classical. Marie's eyes were green, but were green eyes classical? Were any of the goddesses green-eyed. You couldn't trust Homer with colors.

"—my uncle Homer Hochheimer," it was Marie speaking in Hans' mind, "he had a fortune but he missed it because he was color-blind. He had a purple cow and he thought she was black. He kept her till she was fourteen years old and then sold her to the butcher. 'Man, you're throwing away a fortune,' the butcher told him when the sale was consummated. 'You've the only purple cow in the world and you've sold her for a pittance. I'll have a million pounds for her,' and he did."

But to the green eyes, this would have to be solved. The paint is gone these two thousand years from the Greek statues that were colored in their prime, but they were still painted when Pausanes had seen them. Did he call any of them green-eyed? How would he call them green-eyed? Not *chloros* surely. *Chloros* was light yellow-green. Nobody would have eyes that were *chloros*. *Prasino* was a nice green, but was it classical? What was the Greek word for eyes the color of Marie's? In Romany it was *sheleno*, Gypsy green. And once in French *vair*, the green they sang:

Nicolette had eyes of vair,
Something, something, yellow hair—

But *vair* had become *vert* with the disintegration of the French soul, and it was no longer the green of the Troubadors: ignorant wise men even said that *vair* was a shade of gray.

The Blessed Virgin was red-headed and green-eyed in early Flemish Annunciations. Witches were green-eyed. Lilith who was before Eve was a witch and therefore green-eyed. This would give primogeniture to the green-eyed women of the world.

Belloc wrote the only stanza to green eyes, this little bit out of all the game-legged verses that have walked on anapest and pentameter on all the lesser subjects.

"—Belloc? I mean my uncle Biloxi Brannagan. They called him that because he went ashore then. From his window he could see the top of an old piling and he thought it was the mast of his ship. 'There's no hurry, she's still there,' he would say. My aunt Gertrude, she's a Biloxi girl, never did tell him any different. He's still there. He never did catch his ship.' Marie talked so in Hans' mind as he waited for her at the Lotus Eaters. Then she came in person and sat down with him.

"What are you doing, little Hans?" she asked.

"I'm writing a poem about you. You can't see it. You won't scan and you won't rime; that's the trouble with you."

"Shakespeare had the same trouble, Hans dear."

"He did not."

"My uncle Shakes Pearson had the same trouble. We called him that because he always had them. He entered a jingle contest once. It was put on by a chewing tobacco company and he had to write a limerick. He drank pop-skull whisky and he shook all the time. His verse would go like this:—'There was an old lady from Gacko—Who doted on chewing tobacco—', then Shakes would get the shakes after so much effort and have to go after more pop-skull. When he got back the squirrels would have eaten what he had written. They lived so far back in the boondocks that they didn't have any paper and he wrote on bark with oak-ball juice."

In the company of Shakes Pearson, Hans did not feel so incompetent, so he let go with one of the stanzas he had written:

The muses sang when Eve was small,
And they were but diurnal;
But you were long before them all,
For you're at least eternal."

"You make me seem old," said Marie. "Am I the eternal one? Well, Shakes would get another piece of bark and start again: 'There was an old farmer who grew it—And never had leisure to chew it—', then Shakes would get them again and go off for more pop-skull. And when he came back it would be as before: the squirrels would have eaten his epic."

So Hans read again:

"I dreamed of you before we met,
I never was without you;
And all the masters praise you yet,
For they all wrote about you."

"I thought they were referring to me, Hans, but I didn't know that anyone else knew. Well, Shakes would start another one (all our family are very persevering); 'There was an old farmer named Glugg—who was always cutting a plug—He'd whittle and whittle—till it was too little—', then Shakes would go off for more of the same before he got to the last line."

So Hans read more boldly:

"But here the brighter pearls are strung
And rings for all your fingers:
I'll sing you as you ne'er were sung
By all the Minnesingers."

“That's nice, Hans. So Shakes would start another one: ‘When I was a cocky young Jacko—we made our own chewing tobacco—We chopped up old sacks—and boots and boot-jacks—’, then he'd go off for more of it, and what do you think the squirrels did to his opus while he was gone?”

“Ate it up. We poets have a hard time.” He continued:

“And though the globe become a shell
You still will be the leaven,
And I'll remember you in Hell
When you forget in Heaven.”

“That Swinburnish, which is the next thing to swinish, and untrue, dear,” said Marie. “We shall be together: I have decided that. Well, Shakes killed himself. His is the only blot on our escutcheon. And the only note he left said ‘Miriam’ (I'm name after her), ‘You've got to do something about those damned squirrels.’ She never did know what he was talking about or why he killed himself. I'm the only one in our family who understands these things.”

“Why didn't the squirrels eat that last note too?”

“Naturally when they read it they were frightened and ran away.”

“Are there squirrels in Australia, Marie?”

“Not that I know of. Are you trying to trap me? If I'd said wallabies I'd have had to explain what a wallaby was. And besides, wallabies can't read, so there goes the story. I have a letter from Loy to Finnegan. I stopped by the house to kiss the boys good morning. They weren't up yet so I brought their mail to them.” This was the letter:

Cambeltown, New South Wales
Thursday, February 11, 1943

John Solli:
Dear Finnegan:

Margaret and I will be in town tomorrow. If you haven't any more girls, we'll see you and have a big picnic. And if you do have some more girls, bring them, and we'll get two more boys and join you and Marie and Hans. And bring the other Dirty Fiver that we didn't meet and we'll get him a girl too. No news. The garden I planted in November is all weeds. Papa wouldn't hoe the damned thing. But he killed the fatted calf for his prodigal daughter yesterday.

Meet us at the train at 7:45 AM (yes, I said AM). I know that you think it's decadent to get up in the morning and I know that you're right. But it isn't necessary that you be wide awake; I like you better the way you are.

Margie says to tell you that she loves you too. She wants you too now. She switched to you just because I did. But tell Vincent we both still love him also. We love Hans, we love Marie, we love your friend Casey whom we haven't yet met. Meet us tomorrow.

7.

Hans and Marie were still at the Lotus Eaters and it was still afternoon. It could be no other time there. They had been talking for a very long time.

"And I am engaged," said Marie, "And this is the second Thursday of February and the feast of the Apparition, and I will never forget it. Now you have to get me a sparkler, a stunner. What is the brightest thing?"

"In mineralogy there are five stages of brightness which sound like layman's terms but are precise. They are glittering, gleaming, shining, sparkling, and resplendent."

"You are a dirty little pedant. You shall get me a resplendent diamond today, in a ring size seven, and damn the expense."

"Have you a family, Marie? Will they be there?"

"I'm an orphan, but we're a big family. Lots of aunts and uncles."

"Will some of your literary uncles be there?"

"Oh yes. There'll be Shaw. That's my uncle Shamus McGregor. We call him Shamus because he works for the Royal Imperial Dominion Detective Agency. He's a night watchman. Then there'll be Dryden. That's my uncle Dry Dennis Donovan. We call him that because he's always—yes, we are also—two more, Katie. Did you know I was engaged, Katie?"

"A blind woman could see, and I'm not. Two coming."

"—because he was always dry, Hans. And then there's Jules Verne. Oh go ahead. Ask about Jules Verne. Play fair."

"Tell me about him, Marie."

"My uncle Shoeless Veronese van Rijn, my Dutch Uncle. You may have heard the phrase Dutch Uncle before. And we call him Shoeless because—"

"You stretched a point and pronunciation for Shoeless, Marie. Because he goes barefoot?"

"You thought you had me there. Nothing so prosaic. Not only does he go barefoot, but he paints with his feet: watercolors, oils, charcoals. He is a master. He is possibly the finest foot-painter in the world. He travels with carnivals."

"I will have to leave within a week, Marie."

"I know it. It will be as soon as we can, maybe Monday. This is a thing I hardly thought possible, that I could be so in accord with any person. It is one of the great things and it is to a purpose. We will have a place in ministering to a broken world, you and I, Hans."

They sat for many hours and talked. And it never got any later. For the clock on the wall was a painted clock and it did not move, and the calendar was of only one date and it said the thirty-first of spring. The sun in the picture was painted too, with a sleepy face in the middle of it.

"A little later, a little later," said Marie, "we will not drink so much. We cannot celebrate forever, and we have been doing it for a long time. It will be the undoing of at least one of us or of our friends. But today we will eat and drink, for both the Bride and the Bridegroom are here. That isn't blasphemous, is it?"

Katie kept their glasses filled. And after a very long time, when they finally rose to go, it was still afternoon in the Lotus Eaters.

But in the street outside it was late at night.

8.

Nobody knew how Stein got on the picnic. No one had asked him or told him about it. But Stein had ears (physically they were as conspicuous as the nose of Finnegan) and he heard everything everywhere. Nobody but Hans would have invited him. Hans often did kind things unthinkingly. But Stein was very easy to be unkind to; and Hans didn't remember asking him.

But Stein was there and was going to organize the thing. Casey said he wouldn't go if Stein went, and he didn't. He stalked off and took the prettiest of the three new girls with him. Tom Shire and Freddy Castle were there. Virginia and Dorothy were there. These also were red-headed town girls.

At the Bay Hotel they moved a double table onto the terrace for them and stacked it up. They all played softball on the lawn between the terrace and the beach. Later they changed and tried the surf.

Hans and Marie were the only real swimmers, and they went out till they disappeared.

"They'll swim all the way to America if he can keep up with her," said Finnegan. "Why don't they use the Canal; it's shorter that way. They're headed straight for the Horn. They can do it in five weeks if they don't get tired."

They all lay on the grass after they had been in the bay a couple of times. Stein went to work with a crock of ice and some bottles of

Gilbeys and served them. He made the Flying Steinmetz and the Steinheim Stinger. He made the Stein Zombie (how descriptive of its great Originator, said Finnegan); he made the Stein Collins and the Ein-Stein (only one to a customer, they were strong), and the Stein Julip. And he mixed up some of Dr. Stein's Barnacle Remover. The gin was good and the ice was cold and "Stein," said Stein, "is nothing if not a good mixer."

But not always. Sometimes Stein would stand apart and watch them with a look that had in it half amusement, half compassion, a fraction of envy, a smaller fraction of contempt, and a full quarter of proprietorship. And if that adds up to more than unity, why then it was an overflowing look.

After several hours, Marie and Hans came back out of the water. Hans was a little wearied, but Marie was fresh as a Marigold.

"We thought you had swum to America," said Loy.

"We touched," said Marie, "and then we swam back. We didn't want to throw you late."

The waitress brought them eleven gigantic seafood platters piled with armored creatures with claws and pincers and forceps. There were hot rolls as big as loaves, with butter and honey and tear; and they ate till the sun went down.

There isn't anything like the air there. Like the Australian wine, it may be better or it may be worse than the northern," but it is not the same. The air and the sunset here is not the same as in the North.

The hotel would not let them build a bonfire on the lawn, but the girl brought out a trencher-plate two feet across with charcoal briquettes, and lighted it. They all sat around it and sang campfire songs from their childhoods: Clementine and Ivan Scravinski Scavar, Red Wing and Casey Jones, the Camp Town Race Track and Rye Whiskey; the Trail of the Lonesome Pine, I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now, Frankie and Johnny, Stardust, Waltzing Matilda, and There's a Long Long Trail A-Winding.

Finnegan sang:

*"Vecchia zimarra senti
Lo resto al pian
Ascendere—"*

It was from some opera. Finnegan's voice seemed better when it was something foreign and you didn't have to understand the words.

Then Hans played Taps on his mouth organ, and they all got in the car and went back to town.

John Gottfried Schultz and Marie Anna Monaghan were married on Monday, February 15th, 1943 in the Annunciation Church of Sydney, Australia. None of the boy or girl friends were there as John did not have permission from the army to marry, and it was all to be kept secret for a while. There were twenty or thirty persons present, all of them related to Marie.

Then they went for several days to the farm of one of Marie's uncles about seventy-five miles out-back.

And on Thursday, February 18th, Hans and the rest of the boys reported to the Troop Movement Office and were sent back to New Guinea.

10.

ANTIPODAL ODE OF FINNEGAN TO LOY LARKIN

For bright remains of urchin joy
With borrowed echoes from the Bards,
I build me like a house of cards
An Antipodal Ode to Loy.

I spin the spirants and the surds,
And stir Sienna in the gold;
I mix them molten in mold;
I love to weave a web of words.

Your hair is like a pinkish joss
That fits you as a tipsy crown:
It lends a grace to Sydney Town:
O quam beata Civitas!

And gaiety from life did quaff,
And from your mother Shandygaff;
And cut your teeth on riming cant.

Nor yet indulged we but the vine,
Nor nettles grasped, nor tempted rue
With Chamberings as Worldlings do,
Nor took the musty with the wine.

There is a magnitude we missed,
Nor know we why it could not be
That comes to lesser folks than we.
Terribilis est locus iste!

In other days at other doors
May we be otherwise redressed,
And in the dimness put to rest
The ghosts of all our metaphors.

And you like some remembered dawn
Grow goldener when you are gone,
Who like the lithic wife of Lot
Was saltier when she was not.

The fog is fast about the trees,
And I will watch the midnight sea
And in the dark remember thee
With antipodal thoughts like these.

Finnegan would always miss it. That was the point about him.

Chapter Two

The Green Islands

1.

“Of the old writers,” said Finnegan, “Strabo had a sense of the Islands; but he never saw an Ocean Island. Nor did St. Paul. Xavier was the Apostle to the greater Archipelagoes. He knew it was a miracle that, after the end of the world was reached, there was still a whole oceanful of Islands. For these are the Constellations of the Oceans and they prefigure the Skies. Oh, I didn't realize I was talking out loud.”

“That is all right,” said Hans. “Many people talk out loud. You were talking of the archipelagoes?”

“Of how they were born. In the Aegean, a cup of Electrum was smashed and the pieces became the islands, white, gold, silver. Off Malaya, a bowl of bronze was broken and the pieces were the long islands; for bronze shatters so in long pieces. And down here, it was a woven mat. This fell into the ocean and was torn to pieces by the great sea turtles. Then each of the pieces put down roots, and these are the green and fiber-colored islands. Guinea was the center of the piece that the turtles left; this stitched center is the spine of mountains that ridge the whole length.

“These are the legends, the mythologies of their creations; but in the beginning, each of the Archipelagoes was a Pentanesia, a five-island cluster. In the Aegean there were Andros, Tinos, Paros, Amargos, and a fifth one whose name I forget.”

“Naxos,” said Hans. “But archipelago originally meant a great sea, and not the islands in it.”

“I know what it meant, and what it means now. But it was always so that five was the magic number. It is hard to be an island alone, but in an archipelago it is not hard.”

Coming from the south, past the end of the great reef, then after a day and a night in the clear skirting of the d'Entrecasteau and the Trobriands, through the little China Straits, they came home to the bay. This was all primary colors, the blue so bright it was nearly a glare, and the gold that belies the belief that the air has no color. There was the other blue of the water, turning into witch-green in the shallows, and the bright blue, green, brown of the land.

But on the land itself it is darker. It is the ocean and the air that are bright. The green is the very tops of the foliage. From the ground it is like the dark underside of a wharf, the trees bare to a height, the lower fronds dead and dangling, and always deep shade below.

"We use the phrase 'The Coefficient of Scenic Density,' " said Casey. "I've just invented the phrase; it is not yet accepted. But here the coefficient is high."

And it is so. The creeks are close together. In one mile, twelve of them go into the bay, all rushing full. But in-shore it is hard going from one to another. The bluffs rise many feet above them, and often overhang. The tangled roots can be climbed like ladders, but the growth on the steep sides is thick and thorny. There are side chasms and cuts and canyons that fill the entire area like a maze. There is no level ground, only the vertical faces and bluffs.

And the tops are only uncertain spines falling down the other side to the next foamy creek. The terrain is so dense that it would take weeks to explore, with over fifty waterfalls in one square mile, and a rise of eighteen hundred feet; with deep holes and wonderful swimming pools, not ten yards across, three times as deep.

There are dozens of miles of caves that run like spongework through the hollow cliffs, a thousand kind of lizards there, a million kind of birds.

In this square mile, there are three dozen native families who speak three different languages, and who seldom see each other. And there may be a fourth small tribe in this space whose very existence is in doubt even by the other tribes. There is a ghost falls very far up that foams every morning after the rain, and in an hour it is gone.

All this in a space no bigger than a square mile of West Kansas, where you can count the fence posts a mile away, and nothing bigger between.

This is Black Papua.

Black Papua is full of spooks. All the stories of the Blacks are ghost stories. Every night they die and go to purgatory, and in the morning they are shaken by the experience: but through the day they await the return with both eagerness and dread. They bring back elaborate instructions from the dead, and many things are forbidden to them. They are apathetic in the daytime, seeming always to wait for the night and the ghost life.

They are an unsmiling lot, much different from the happier Malays and Tagalogs the boys would meet further on the way. They are neither good farmers nor craftsmen. Their lodges are built for them by the Kiriwinans and other people from the islands offshore and out in the bay. The Papuans themselves cannot build.

They are, however, the Well of the World. They have a bottomless

unconscious. All other peoples and lands of the world are but entities in the unconscious of the Papuans. The Kiriwinans and other nearby people understand this, that they live only on the sufferance of the Papuans, that they will vanish if the Papuans no longer maintain them in the vast cavern of their under-persons. Further peoples of the world, however, do not understand this.

2.

Henry Salvatore was glad to have the rest of the Dirty Five back. "I have been running this army entirely by myself," he said. "You boys aren't much help, but you are some. I will again delegate the details. I won't say I haven't missed you. I have.

"I've been reading you mail to keep abreast. There's a couple of letters from that Show Boat, Vincent. She says that she loves me too. I am easy to love for those who haven't seen me. Casey, there's a long letter from your friend Duffey. I didn't understand all of it."

Casey was irritated. He was the only one who didn't like others to read his mail before he had seen it. In many ways he was more touchy than the others. "Togetherness is the only god of the seculars," he used to say, "and they are sticky about it. But we as Christian men should keep it in perspective."

"And now," said Henry, "I am sure that you have each brought me a bottle. Set them on the table so I can thank you all at once."

And the boys set them out and paid homage to the Emperor Henry. Henry, the fifth member of the Dirty Five, had not been to Australia with the rest. He was the fat Frenchman. He stood four or five inches above the rest, and he slouched; and height was not his greatest measure.

He was stronger than Hans who lifted weights an hour a day, and up to fifty yards he could beat either Finnegan or Vincent on foot. He was a giant, an ogre. He frightened little children and he frightened little soldiers. His hands were bigger than some whole people.

He had refused the furlough to Australia: he thought he was safer where he was. "I'm a lecher, a drunkard, a glutton, and a brawler," he'd say. "I ought to be chained up for the public protection. But I'm better in the jungle than I would be in town."

Now the Five were together again after some weeks, all in one pyramidal at dusk. (Henry had returned to the Sacraments during their absence, and now they would live always together for a while.)

The Dirty Five was a mystic society, something like the secret brotherhoods of the black boys around them, very close and

unsunderable:

Henry F. Salvatore (The Fat Frenchman) (Who was also Euphemus, the real master of the Fleet.)

John G. Schultz (Who was Hans) (Who was Orpheus).

Vincent J. Stranahan (Who was Meleager).

Kasmir W. Szymansky (Who was Casey) (Who was Peleus).

John A. Solli (Finnegan) who was a changeling, who was of the other blood or the double blood (and who was Iason).

All five of these had lived before, and mythology knows them as:

Friar Tuck, or Pantegruel, or the Giant of the Beanstalk (Henry).

Apollo, or Dr. Faustus, or Aquinas Redevivus (Hans).

Dionysus, or Ulysses, but who was also a Terras or Arracht (Finnegan).

Mercurius, or Don Vincent de Ollos, or Austin (Vincent).

Kasmir Gorshok (Casey the Crock) a ninth century scholar and necromancer.

These five, these of the special pentanthropy, were not of the World: they were, in their fleeting moments, of the Wonder. Between them they knew everything, had thought all thoughts, had done all things, or at least had them in mind to do. They were a brotherhood, and yet the most alienated of them was the most brother. They had done great things long ago, but an amnesia has since sealed them off.

Now the boys drank together as they caught up on the mail and papers from home. For lanterns they used beer bottles filled with gasoline, and tightly twisted rags for wicks.

Vincent had letters from Theresa (Show Boat) Piccone, and from his mother.

Casey had letters from his mother, a long screed from Melchisedech Duffey, and two letters from Mary Catherine Carruthers in Chicago.

Hans had only a half-page letter in German from his father. But after he had read it, he did a strange thing. He set to it and wrote two letters. These were the first letters he had written since he had been in the army.

Finnegan had only letters from a Dorothy Yekouris in New Orleans. Casey was troubled by passages in Duffey's letter:

‘There is a problem here which I will have to live with. The peculiar people are after me. They are rocking the *Crock*. I have only been bringing it out once a month. They have tempted me, threatened me, and cudgeled me. They have offered me the riches of the world

(as Satan once offered), and all the kingdoms. I would have funds and distribution, and the *Crock* would come out once a week. They would corrupt it and make it an organ of the infiltrates. And when I would not do it, they struck.

'My wife left me, for a time, when I would not be blackmailed, for they brought up more dirt from my past than I remembered. Though she is back now, it will never be the same. Then they cudgeled me literally and broke my nose. My right hand is also broken, and my side is taped. I used to love a good fight. Now I am older.

'Do not gamble even a dollar's worth of the stock. They are out to get me through you now. There is a torpedo in your part of the world who has you as one of his assignments. He is smooth-talking and jug-eared, and once used the name of Hugo Stone. Don't let them take you over. Bleed a little, bleed a lot, you can always grow more blood. Remember the writ of those who kill both soul and body.

'Everything is fine here. I manage to stay good-humored and healthy except for the bruises and broken bones. You should have a trusted friend there to whom you can turn over your affairs. There is always a danger of death in wartime, and I think there is another danger near to you. Don't worry, whatever you do. Worry makes a man old and cranky.'

Henry watched Casey as he read.

"You in trouble, Case?" he asked.

"No. You shouldn't read other people's mail."

"I don't unless I'm interested. Is Stein the torpedo?"

"Stein is the torpedo. Did the *Crock* come?"

"It's on my shelf."

The *Crock* was thin and tabloid, but well done. On the cover was the unchanging picture of a very old and very ornate chamber pot, a fine engraving that was made by d'Allesandro in his middle Chicago period. It was the finest thing of its kind. It was the only thing of its kind. It was the most beautiful chamber pot in the world.

The name of the *Crock* was in black Gothic, and the subscript 'Formerly the C of S' bore witness to its early clandestine origin. The twenty pages included a sonnet by Schrade, an ode by Ethyl Ellenberger, a ballad by Demetrio Glauch, an article on 'Diabolism in the World Today' by Thos. J. Chronicker, S.J.; one on 'The Mythology of Liberalism' by Christopher Tompkinson, on 'The Floating Screen—The Next Important Development in Football' by Tom (Big Bear) Rogers. There was a section 'Books Abroad' by Polly Polyglot who was Mary Frances Rattigan.

Most of the magazine was written by Duffey. Not that he didn't want to print others, but he could write better than others could. 'Moles at the Grass Roots' was in his style, and 'Fables in Fabianism'. So was 'The Consumer, the Cooperative, and the Coefficient of Cost Constancy'. There was a section *Urbe et Orbe*, notes of the month of Chicago and of the world. There was a serious review section

‘Judgment Day’; there was a short résumé of the new recordings with a partiality towards Chicago style jazz, and a pro and con letter forum which was possibly the best thing in the magazine.

There were four wood-cuts by Groben, and at the back a collection of musings titled ‘On the John’ with a small drawing at the bottom showing the Thinker in semi-darkness with only a crescent-shaped shaft of light piercing the gloom.

3.

“Why would anyone want to take over the *Crock*?” Henry asked.

“It’s better than it seems,” Casey said. “It has a following among people who count, or at least among people who are imitated. You’ve no idea the amount of stuff that is lifted out of it. It sets up echoes all over. A little left-handed slanting here would do the peculiar people a lot of good.”

“What is Duffey anyhow?”

“He is a Centrist. He is the only member of the Catholic Center Party of America. He is the Party. d’Allesandro, Mary Frances, Demetrio Glauch, and myself are his best prospects. If he could fully enlist us he would have a party of five. Smaller parties have done well in Europe. But it is lonesome to be a party of one.

“He believes in new definitions. He says that the self-styled Liberals are the most illiberal of men, and that no honest man has used that name since the great collectivists stole it and used it to mean its opposite.”

Henry and Casey walked out into the jungle. They went till they came to the bed of a churning creek. It was a creek you had to climb up to.

“Where did he get the name Melchisedech?”

“His confirmation name. He wasn’t confirmed till he was forty. His given name is Michael. He already had the beard: surely you knew that he had a full beard. It’s pointed, and it’s the whole point of him.”

There was a deep hole here beaten out by a waterfall. They swam for a while in the dark, a dangerous thing to do, as allowing the entry of spirits, according to the Papuans. Then they got out and sat on the tops of two boulders. There was fox-fire through the jungle: the dead wood and rotted leaves on the ground glowed like coals.

“What is he talking about there?” Henry asked.

“The Federal aggrandizement and other things. His analogies are hard to follow. The new liberal is partisan, he says, and can allow only one kind of thought and creed which is secretly in love with the

ancient tyranny.”

“He just doesn't like government?”

“The smaller it is, the better he likes it. But the hecklers get him. He can address a communion breakfast, and the infiltrates may come all the way from Boston to give him a hard time. He hasn't much actual judgment but he has a healthy stomach. It automatically rejects the rotters. Someday he may reject me. He would have the infiltrates up by the thumbs if he could.”

“There are for certain Infiltrates in the Church?”

“Duffey has an index of several thousand of them in laymen's groups.”

“Why would he want to index them? He may be doing this all wrong.”

“Do you know the right way, Henry?”

“No. But I will allow it. I will know it by —by tomorrow morning.”

“How will you know it?”

“I will just know it. I have felt it coming. I will tell you about it if it is subject to explanation. Casey, I have been the only snake in this group. I am no damn good and you know I'm no damn good. I have never known any of the other three to do a single mean thing, not one. You have, Casey, but not too many. You're not in it with me. I have been as bad a man as you have ever known.”

“What is this leading to, Henry?”

“I'm just a mean Frenchman from the swamps. Even my mother gave up on me, and she always thought there was a chance even for the Devil. I haven't a way with the world like that banana-nosed Finnegan, not even if he has the wrong way with the world. I'm not good-looking like Vincent. I'm not a scholar like Hans nor a dilettante like you. But have you noticed that when there's something that the rest of you can't do, not even Hans, I can. When you've talked a thing to a standstill, I have worked it out. Now there will be something, and I am the only one who will be able to do it. An odd thing is going to happen to me, not entirely of my choosing. I have always known pretty well what would happen. And now this thing will come down on me.”

It was getting chilly, and the boys dressed on the boulders.

“Did you have a good time down south?” Henry asked.

“I think that Finnegan did,” Casey said. “That's what you mean, isn't it? He may not be clear off the beam yet. Vincent and Hans did. I did a little. It's nice to get among them and use up a little leisure and money. It's nice in the islands too. I dread going home. There's some things there that I may not be able to deal with, and I enjoy putting them off for a couple of years.”

They climbed down through the jungle to the bivouac area. A

coconut possum was squawking above them, and an 'Oh Boy' bird called. We never did find out the right name of that bird. It always sounded like Donald Duck calling 'Oh Boy'.

Finnegan was still awake, and the three had a drink.

"Z'drovie," said Casey.

"Santé," said Henry.

"Slainthe," said Finnegan the Irishman. Then he had another drink for his other person.

"Salute," said Solli the Italian.

4.

Henry dreamed that night, as he knew he would, and of a boat. The name of the boat was the *Navicula Petri*. It looked like a Galleon, and yet it was quite other. There were many pennants and flags flying from it.

In hoc signo vinces, said one of them. And there was another in the looping handwriting of Finnegan, the left hand of Finnegan for he wrote left-handed half the time: *Nisi esses sollicitus*—, and then the Latin was scratched out and it was Englished boldly: *If you can't be careful, be good*.

Ubicumque fuerit corpus illic congregabuntur et aquilas, said another, and it was an echo of the high motto of the Dirty Five. And then there were three banners in a series that read: *Tu es Petrus*, and *Portae inferi non prevalebunt*, and *tibi dabo claves regni*.

There were various devices. There was a Lamb, and a Greek Cross. There was a Fish, and a Six-Pointed Star. "I always assumed it would be five-pointed," said Henry, "but I don't know why I thought so."

There was a woman, and a Serpent, and a Crescent Moon. "If I were making the little boat," said Henry, "I would consolidate the symbols for neatness."

It was hard to discern whether this was a toy boat, or a real boat afar off. Part of it was plainly more real even than the prosaic world, and part of it was drawn in with child's crayola. The seamen may have been dolls, or they may have been alive. There were the Apostles; and Stephen and Paul and the Baptist; Linus and Clement and Cletus. There were Barbara and Catherine, looking like sea-urchins; there were Gregory and Constantine. Jerome and Augustine glared at each other over a davit. Francis and Anthony were there, Thomas and Patrick, Hildebrand and Adrian the Dutchman. The Theresas, French and Spanish; and Joan and Xavier.

"It is odd that I know them," said Henry, "for I never saw them

before. But that is who they are.”

The boat was in trouble, and it gained in verisimilitude as the waves rose and the wind blew. It was a real ship and it was badly tossed, *et descendit procella venti in stagnum, et complebantur et periclitabantur*, and the account seemed to be translated for Henry into his own tongue like the sub-script of a foreign language movie, *un tourbillon fondit sur le lac La Barque se replissait d'eau*—

“Never mind,” Henry told the dream. “I recognized the passage. I always preferred the Vulgate to the French.”

There was salt in the spray. Was the Sea of Genesarat salty? Or was this a bigger boat on a larger sea?

And now Henry first noticed the shattered and broken masts. There were many masts once, and the boat must have flown like a great white castle; but now they were splintered and down. There was Albion of the White Cliffs whose Apostasy is foretold in the Apocalypse. There was Moscovy which was Third Rome. There was Gaul itself. And others were betopped and tottering.

A multitude was watching the boat, and almost any one of it could have reached out a hand and helped. But the people believed it was only a toy boat, as Henry at first had believed. They did not know that it was real and was about to go down: and that if it went down, the whole world would go down with it.

But Henry the Frenchman from the swamps knew that it was real and that he was involved with it. He also knew that it was the same ship as the *Argo* on which he already sailed, but that the quest had been sanctified during these last short millennia.

And he realized, before he awoke, that this was his Vocation; and that, whether he accepted it or not, it had come down to him.

5.

Stein was in evidence again. One of his duties as a Special Service sergeant was to provide interests and entertainments for the troops, and he had set up a little G.I. radio station. He had two pyramidal tents for himself and his many-tentacled activities, and in one of them was Anopheles Network.

Casey wrote squibs for the station, which brought him into contact with Stein, though he held him in hatred.

There were many pseudo-sponsors: ‘Mother McCutcheon’s Seasick Pills—Learn to live with your Discomfort.’ ‘Uncle Joe Tompkinson’s Torpedo Juice—Explosive Personality by the Natural Method.’ ‘Harry Ludenschlager’s Hangover-Healer—Is Trepanning the only Answer?’

‘Ching-Ling Charley’s Doss House—Entertain your friends in genteel surroundings, Atmosphere you can cut with a knife.’

They had a hundred or so good records, and there were always a bunch of boys around who wanted to talk over the radio. And Stein had a five-foot shelf of old humor magazines from which he read jokes over the air.

They were good programs, but something was lacking that only Anne could provide. Anne broadcast for the Japanese from a station in Java. She had an intimate voice, and she would sing homesick-inducing songs, and she understood the soldiers. In some ways Stein couldn’t compete with Anne, not when she signed off ‘This is your best enemy, Anne, Good Night.’

Stein had another activity. He delivered lectures. He was plausible, and his audience was uninformed. None of the Dirty Fivers thought it worthwhile to interfere, except Casey. And that was the beginning of the troubles of Casey.

Stein had mannerisms and it would have been easy to heckle him, but Casey didn’t. He questioned him in the question period, and the listeners understood what was wrong. So the question period had to be done away with. And there had to be a showdown.

Casey was on the carpet before a furious Colonel Laycheck and three livid Majors, Meyerhofer, Twicherby, and Terwilliger. None of these was a line officer.

“Do you know what we can do, Sergeant Szymansky?” the Colonel asked. “We can charge you with disloyalty, and we can find against you.”

“Sir, Sergeant Stein, under another name, was a known Red in Chicago, and he is teaching doctrine here. In an open discussion period of a program set up over your own signature, I called him on some of his more dishonest misstatements. Is that wrong?”

“If you persist, Sergeant, you will suffer for it. I am giving you a chance to back out of this. I order you never again to interfere with Sergeant Stein in any way. I forbid you to disparage him to any other soldier. I forbid you to make statements or speeches of a tenor opposite to his. I mean it when I say that we can find against you for disloyalty, and what I am talking about is ten years. Is that clear enough?”

“No sir. I don’t think I have been able to make clear to you the matter of his speeches.”

“Damn it, man, I *write* his speeches. Do you understand now?”

“I understand your words and intent, sir. I have received an education in the last three minutes.”

The trouble was that Casey was a little of a coward in this. He hesitated and was half-bluffed. And when he did act against them, he

did it in a foolish way and with bad timing. That was the way he did many things.

6.

Vincent had a letter from Show Boat (Teresa Piccone) in St. Louis.

'Vincent, honey, things are in a terrible shape. Isn't that a refreshing change from letters that start out All Well With Us? I think a few ashes in the soup makes it taste better. It's cold all day. I tell mama I'm going to find someone to shack up with to keep warm. She says 'Teresa, I don't believe that I would. What would Vincent say?' It's a good thing I have mama to keep me on the s. and n.

'Your mother is very mad at me. I stayed with her three days. I cooked her a different specialty every day and now she won't be able to get the garlic out of the house for a month. I tell her that she has to learn to live with it. She says that garlic is like sin, that there has to be so much of it in the world, but woe to them by whom it comes. Now she's got where she doesn't notice it (the garlic, not the sin), so I tell her that she's saturated with it and soon won't be able to smell it at all. She doesn't like that. Really, Madame Monica and Show Boat get on very well, though I never will know why you chose a dignified mother. Don't you think she'd make a good Medium? I tell her to work up an act and we'll put her on at the Star and Garter.

'The old S&G is having its troubles. They are going to put us off limits and even close us up if we don't stop advertising the place as a burlesque. Papa is a purist and says that his shows are purist too, and are burlesque in the original sense of the word (I was going to write 'in the broadest sense of the word'). Papa told them that both cops and colonels should take a short course in philology. He didn't help himself any by arguing with them. The sign still says Burlesque.

'It is the last real burlesque theater in America, but it gives us a bad name. We had a little stripper by Monday looking for a job. She's an Italian girl from NOLA; I asked her about Finnegan, but she doesn't think she knows him. She is broke so she is staying with us. We have given her little parts but she won't be satisfied. She just plain wants to take her clothes off. Her name is Maria Tornabuoni, a good renaissance name, and she is in the renaissance style. Her overhang reminds me of that bridge, you know the one; I'm sure it's renaissance.

'We still do four shows a day, but Papa and I have to do most of the daytime ones. This week we have a no-good dog act, and you know what I think of dogs. You remember the magnificent tribute someone paid to W.C. Fields: 'A man who hates dogs and little

children can't be all bad.' I hope they say something as nice about me when I'm dead. I don't hate children though: only dogs and some adults.

'And we have a ventriloquist this week. He lets me in his act and I work his figures some. Did you know that dummies don't like to be called dummies? They prefer to be called figures. I know how they feel. I'd rather be called a figure than a dummy myself. Afterwards I get some man from the audience, usually a soldier, up on the stage. I make him sit on my lap and gape his mouth while I ventriloquise for him. I've had twenty-five different men sit on my lap this week. Isn't that fun? I get in every act I can and everybody loves me, especially the soldiers. Aren't you glad your girl is so popular with the fellows?

'You haven't given a full account of the Rover Boys at the Antipodes. I have a letter from a Marie Monaghan and now I know a secret and you don't know it. And if you guess it from this, it wasn't I who told it. I never tell secrets.

'I meant to ask about someone else. Oh yes, you. How are you? And mainly, are you being good? I am, *O favorite mio, Quanto te amo!* I love you. I love your mother Monica. I love this lonesome old town till you come back to me here. Mary was by to see me one day this week. She is wonderful and it rubs off on me. Now I am wonderful too.

—Theresa (Show Boat) Piccone

7.

They had moved twice up the coast, several hundred miles at a jump. The Military and Thalassocratic Adventure is no part of this account, but the little iron insects of beach and sea had been eating up the great craggy bird that is the Island of New Guinea. And then they were clear off the head of the bird (the Vogelkop) and to a little Dutch Island four hundred miles beyond. Now they were settled again, and everything nearly as before.

Casey and Hans no longer lived in the sergeants' tent. Casey had a little trouble with officialdom and had spent four weeks in stockade. Now he was back in the battery, though no longer a sergeant. He had to attend a rehabilitation course three times a week, and for the rest of the time he labored as a basic.

And Hans was no longer a sergeant. He had been reduced in rank for marrying without permission. Hans minded his loss of rank not at all.

Casey minded his though. For now there was a cloud on his record, a stockade term, a suspicion of disloyalty, unamericanism, and mental

incompetence against him. He had to attend a class called 'Reaffirmation of American Values' taught by Stein the Red. He also had to endure the rumor, possibly started by that twisted humorist himself, that he and Stein were too close. But, most of all, he had to endure Stein.

Stein was not Machiavellian, but Casey thought he was. And Casey was infected, just when he believed himself cured, with the sickness to come later. Stein was not good for Casey, but he believed that he was just what that boy needed. And what Stein himself needed had just begun to stir.

But, after a while, something happened; then things became more livable.

8.

The new Islands weren't greener, but they were brighter, with the jungle less dense and with occasional meadows. These were happier islands with happier people, lighter and more lithe. And then there was the Event which contributed to the new feeling.

"Casey," Stein said suddenly one day, "I'm in love."

"My God, with what?"

"A woman. That is normal to others. Does it seem abnormal in me?"

"Yes. A warthog I could understand, but not a woman. What tribe is she?"

"Casey, you are a kidder, but the needle tickles a little. She is a white woman. I met her today and fell in love."

Now Casey knew that there was no white woman on the island. He also knew that Stein had very poor eyesight. But stone the crows! What object or being could have seemed a white woman to the myopic Stein. And what token could it (or she, if it were alive and sexed) have given of reciprocity?

Casey went in search of the answer.

At the Coconut Grove they were going to put on a show. Stein was commonly in charge of such. The Aussies would be in it too and share the talent. The Aussies haven't any talent, but they did have Tania. Tania was to be in the show: Tania was Tommy Trouncer, a tow-headed Aussie lance corporal. He had a double voice and could do impersonations.

"Lord, Casey, we took your double-eyed hoot owl," one of the Aussies told him. "We just wanted to get Tommy into the show, and Stein has the say on those things. We made him a gown and dressed

him like a sheila and took him for an audition. You'd think a man like Stein would be the last to be fooled. I guess we've all been in the jungle too long."

"It really couldn't be that. Such things aren't possible," Casey said, "but Stein hasn't any sense of humor." Casey was partly mistaken in that statement.

"He doesn't have an angle, Case," one of the Aussies said. "He's cooked, carved, and eaten. We finally told him that one of the brigadiers had her, that he had slipped her onto the island for vile purposes. We told him that the brigadier was temporarily gone, and that Tania wanted to be in the show to give the boys a treat. 'The only way to do it,' said Stein, 'is to bill her as a female impersonator.' 'My God, that's brilliant,' we told him, 'there isn't another brain like that in the world.' 'I doubt it,' he said, and he swore us to secrecy. We must never reveal to anyone that she is really a woman. Lord, Casey, can't he see the hair on his legs?"

"Stein can't see in much detail. And then there is something that can happen to a man that defies explanation. We are none of us immune. By the way, what do you Aussies wash in, sheep-dip?"

"That's the perfume. That's what gets him. He talks about vernal ecstasy and things like that. He wants to make a good woman of Tommy. He wants to bring charges against the old brigadier. And he wants Tania, Tommy, to wait for him, and after this is over they will live together somewhere in a better, cleaner world."

"This opens up a whole new game," Casey cried out. "Help me cook this goose, oh help me cook this goose. Tommy, how good are you?"

"Casey, I'm the best in the world. You can't get better than that."

Casey left the Australian contingent, taking with him Tommy and one liaison man, and went to seek advice from the four wisest men, besides himself, on the island. The Dirty Five and the two Aussies sat up late and concocted their dirtiest plan, the disenthronement of Stein and his masters.

It would make international complications; there would be hell to pay. But if it worked, and it could work, it would pull down Stein and maybe even the furious colonel and the three livid majors. They did the staff work that night, and then Casey followed up on the details during the several days that were available.

He gave it everything he had. It was a crime that the lecherous old brigadier should corrupt the girl, and her no ordinary girl, as the dullest could see. And if Stein were really in love, then who more than he was entitled to real love when it came? Certainly he could hope for the ecstatic life in the cleaner world to come. There are the specially favored, and one may enter this class by noteworthy boldness. The

main thing was to get her away from the brigadier while she was still pure of soul. The goal was worth the challenge.

With Stein's connections, could he not get the colonel and the majors to intervene? Have staged a sudden raid? Have the brigadier charged with moral turpitude and get Tania sent back home?

"It can be done, Absalom, it must be done," Casey swore.

"It is worth the effort," said Stein. "As I am a man I will bring it off."

The show was a success, and Tania was the star of the show. It was so real that the boys almost tore up the place. Not that they couldn't see the hair on the legs; but, as they said, they had all been in the jungle too long.

And sometime after the show Tania had a tryst with Stein. The Dirty Fivers and the Aussie co-conspirators were jubilant. Tommy swore that he could pull a double-stall, a triple-stall, that he could keep old four-eyes on a loose hook. He said that he was a cousener from way back and had a talent for this. After all, he was the best in the world.

So they left it to him with high hopes.

Many hours later, before it was quite daylight, an odd creature crawled out of the woods. It had lost its glasses and could not see where it was going. It was covered with mud and terribly torn. There was blood on its noggin, and its eyes were blackened and nearly closed.

Casey put it to bed in sorrow, for this was Stein, and it meant that the conspiracy had crashed on the rocks of Tommy's temper. Casey went to get the details.

"There wasn't any way I could handle it, Case," Tommy said. "That bloke is mad. He wanted the world of the future last night. He's stronger than he looks, and he got me spooked. I blew clean up. He's uncanny. He had an off-key laugh that turned me to ice. I had to beat him against the trees and stomp him into a slough.

"But he never did catch on."

Casey flashed with sudden hope. "He never knew, Tommy? He still doesn't know?"

"No. He doesn't know anything. When you're that crazy you don't get over it."

Casey returned to the wounded Stein and restored him to life with minor surgery and a certain roughness.

"Tell me, Absalom, if you can talk, what happened?"

"Oh Casey, she was magnificent. She is pure as the snow and I was contemptible. She is full of divine fire when she is angry. Her strength is more than human. I am ten times as much in love now."

"Well dammit man, don't lie there and bleed. This calls for sudden

and drastic action. The brigadier is back this morning and is no doubt forcing her to submit at this instant. Get to the colonel and the majors and tell them that he is a fascist fink and had you beaten for your views. Tell them that a sudden raid will find him guilty of moral turpitude and give a chance to retaliate. The old brigadier is one man who was never fooled by—I mean, who is entirely unsympathetic to their views. Had you talked to them before?”

“Yes, they were almost ready to agree. They were a little doubtful of the legality, but they are sure that they can pull it off if the evidence is really there. As you have guessed, they are very highly connected.”

“Then go at once, Stein. Speed is of the essence.”

And, incredibly, a sortie was made, and with climaxing results. The amity of two nations was in the balance, and a seismic tremor went through the island.

The Aussie Brigadier was puzzled at first. “If there's a sheila here, then someone should be punished,” he said. “That isn't authorized at all.”

But when he realized that *he* was supposed to be the guilty one, then he became very angry and sent for the whole damned island to find out what was wrong. A raiding party doesn't just burst in on an allied brigadier like that.

His American counterpart, caught in utter ignorance, sought an explanation. When none was found, he went howling through the jungle for blood.

The pale star of Stein fell for a while. The little red stars of the three livid majors sank with a rumble. And that of Colonel Laycheck fell like lightning.

There is a footnote to this. It came out years later, and from Hans. Stein, he said, was not as myopic as all that; he had, in fact, begun to acquire quite a long vision. He was in no way fooled by that tow-headed Aussie lance corporal. Stein could see a gag coming a long ways off; and here he was actually the one who invented the gag and intruded it into those cobber heads. Then he went along with it, as he loved to play the buffoon.

He hadn't been gulled by Casey; he had gulled Casey and all the rest. And he had spooked Tommy Trouncer plenty at their strange meeting. The humor of the situation is several layers deep and it grows in retrospect. It is true that he didn't know that Tommy Trouncer could hit that hard.

Stein was a little tired of the majors and the colonel by that time and he had seen how they could be brought into the gag. It is nearly certain that he tossed that quoit to Casey who thought that it was his own. Hans was the only one of the Dirty Five who understood this,

however. The other four never did suspect it.

They didn't? They didn't? Are you sure they didn't?

9.

'We are strangers at home,
We are exiles in Erin.'

—O'Gnive

"When I was a little boy," said Finnegan, "I had an Italian reader. This was when I was still an Italian, before I turned into an Irishman. There was a story called, I believe, *Specchietto*, the Little Looking Glass. A boy felt sorry for the little boy in the looking glass who has no face unless he gave him one. He said that he would lend him his own face, and this he did by means of a charm.

"The boy in the looking glass climbed out and borrowed, not only the face, but also the shadow and the name of the original little boy. And these (though only loaned to him) he dishonestly kept, for he never returned them. The first little boy now sits in a dark corner of the world and nobody even knows that he's a little boy, for he doesn't look like one; he doesn't look like anything at all."

"Well, you couldn't have been that little boy," said Vincent. "If you lost your face, at least you have kept your nose."

"Yes, I am that little boy," said Finnegan. "I have a comic mask instead of a face, and a moniker instead of a name. The shadow I cast is not a shadow at all; it is only the shadow of a shadow. All the persons I know are so indeed, but I do not seem a person to myself. I am not Italian like my father, nor Irish like my mother; I am a changeling of no ancestry. I can look in the face of the city where I was born and find it blank. I walk the towns and roads of my own land in amazement and ask 'Is this the world? Or is there another world, and I have stumbled into the wrong one?' When I am alone I feel as though I were a defective ghost who has misplaced his soul and is doomed to its search."

"Next week, same hour, listen for further adventures of Finnegan in search of a personality," said Casey.

But Finnegan did not find it the next week either.

10.

"The thing is," said Vincent, "that we can never be sure of anything since it might all have started only ten minutes ago."

"Let's try that again," said Henry.

"The whole thing, creation, might have happened only ten minutes ago; the universe with the red shift already built into the distant light, with the momentum up and the life partly spent, the matter somewhat expanded and rate of expansion well under way; the earth complete with its fossils and vestiges, half-way down the slope from the fourth Pleistocene ice age, with its carbon balances and its partly run-down atomic clocks; its sediments made to show a picture of fifteen hundred million years; its insects and its tumbleweeds at their present development; the brains of its two and a half billion human beings etched with the wrinkles of memories of things that never happened, and dreams that were never dreamed."

"The idea isn't new at all," said Casey. "I could cite you —"

"That a thing has been thought of before is not proof positive that it is wrong," said Vincent. "Once there were two bums in a gutter. 'We ought to straighten up,' one of them said, 'get on our feet, get cleaned up, to provide for ourselves even if it means working a little; it would possibly give us a new outlook.' 'No,' said the other bum, 'It's already been done. There's nothing new about it.' So they didn't do it because it had been done. This is intimidation by primogeniture, and it is those who call themselves the boldest who are most intimidated by this fear. I am not. I never hesitated to stride in the elephant spoor, or to match paces with the —"

"Oh get on with it, Vincent," said Henry.

"Suppose that only ten minutes ago were made the marks that mean old nostalgias and new loves, debts and guilts, and rankling resentments of things that never were; books just made in full print and the corresponding influences in the marks of many minds. A morning paper made this afternoon and with all the pennant standings and results of yesterday's games that were never played; batters born in a slump though they have never seen a bat. No, I can't see a thing wrong with my theory. It could be true. That's all you can say for any theory."

"He is Finnegan just created with a built-in hangover from too much jungle juice drunk last night, and yet there was neither jungle juice nor a last night."

"I *thought* that last night seemed a little unreal," Casey said.

"Can anyone think of a better explanation? We will call it Stranahan's Theory of the Uncreated Creation. There's more to it, what I call the Shadow and Substance motif. But I'll not tell that, as you are not paying attention."

"You are wrong, Vincent, and for this reason," Finnegan said. "It

hasn't happened yet. The world hasn't begun. It may begin in ten minutes or ten aeons or never. I was wrong the several times I believed it had begun."

"It's begun for me," Vincent insisted. "A world can only exist for an elite. The present world exists for an elite of one, me. It is in being for me and not for the rest of you. The point is that none of you is here at all, and I am here only by an act of will."

But the only one of them who worried about his unreality was Finnegan.

11.

During those days Hans was at full strength. He had entered a period of ease and happiness that seemed to go on forever. That he had been disciplined for marrying without permission, that he was now a basic in a battery where he had been staff sergeant, that his wife was a distant foreigner and himself a soldier on an obscure island with at least a chance of their never seeing each other again, it didn't matter. Nothing could pull him down.

Hans had the world under perfect control, and he played it like a fish. He could have landed it long ago but he enjoyed teasing it. So he climbed the cliffs that nobody else could climb and found the peoples who had never been found before.

Hans had better luck than most at meeting the cliff people. Hans could find all people, and he was accepted by all. Finnegan always said that the cliff people were like the Abominable Snowman, only seen by liars. Finnegan would have qualified there, but he seemed afraid of what he would encounter in the strange race. And Hans himself was quite a liar in those days; but he did meet the cliff people, and ate with them, and learned to talk with them. They ate taro and goop and meat. Sometimes the meat was cuscus or coconut possum, and sometimes it was bird meat. And again sometimes, Hans would hint (hey, are you listening to him?) that it was an unidentified meat with a very peculiar taste.

"Hans, you are a phoney," said Finnegan. "Melville was the last one who could tell a cannibal story with a clean heart, and he was a little bit phoney too."

"Cannibal is too common a term," said Hans. "We initiates prefer to be called necrophagists."

"That's better," Finn said. "I thought you ate them alive."

But in truth Hans had found why Finnegan (the only other one who could have climbed there) was afraid to meet the Cliff People.

The Cliff People looked exactly like Finnegan, the same great noses and the same chinlessness, the same deceptive shambling gait, and the same sudden speed and strength. Whatever remnant they were, Finnegan was one too. Imagine a hundred brown men who looked just like Finnegan! Imagine a hundred sturdy Cliff Women who looked just like him, and yet didn't look bad at all!

Hans had a friend named Sulem, a shore boy, and not a hill boy. Sulem had a block of heavy black wood. He was carving a statue from it. What he wanted was to use the power tools in the shop-truck, but he came to that gradually; one day just to sharpen his knives, then to use the wood-rasps and rat-tailed files for touch-ups.

“But Hans, what I really want is to put the thing on a lathe and cut it down. It will save me a month of work in five minutes, and if you let me use it all day—”

They were at another station now. They were on Luzon. On the way they passed some islands and Hans told a story about them: “That's where the Chinese get the nests for their birds'-nest soup,” he told them. “This is the only place in the world. The trade is very old.”

On Luzon, everything was better than it had ever been with them: no duty, and a general let-down, and only a month or so to wait for a ship home. They all began to go out among them, and Finnegan a little too much.

That night the Dirty Fivers were all in the Buffalo Bar, and with them was Captain Gutierrez. The Captain was a Tagalog. He had the extremely youthful appearance of them all, and, though about twenty-three, he appeared thirteen. They called him Sammy and were good friends.

Stein had recently read the New Testament. He read it through without stopping as he did all books. He had meant to read it before, as he had long ago set himself the task of reading everything.

A week later, on New Year's Eve, just after supper, they loaded on trucks and went into Manila. And just after midnight, their group started to load on ship to come home.

"Dammit man, we don't want it primitive, we only want it to seem primitive. Look, Hans, we figure out ten patterns. Then I bring you the blocks and you do the rough work with the lathes and power-saws. You can do a hundred a day. Then my uncles will finish them and put on the marks. And I know some girls who can peddle the things to the outfits. We'll be rich."

They didn't set it up, though. On one island something similar had been done and the statuettes were inferior. Hans was right to forbid it. They didn't go into production with Sulem, but they did let him use the wood-rasps and the files and the saws, and he made monsters for them all. The one he worked on most seriously was the Grandfather of Finnegan, a very small amulet.

Sulem explained this to Hans apart.

"That boy Finnegan, he has no *tujuan*, Hans. This is might strange not to have one. The crust of the world is thin enough even for those who have it. What is to prevent one who lacks it from stepping through and falling forever? When we want to see a person truly, we chew *tai* leaves which gives us second sight. Then we see him surrounded by his own light. I do not know the word in English."

"Aura," said Hans.

"By his aura. When we see the aura, we understand the direction of the *tujuan*. But your Finnegan has neither."

"He once said that he did not have a shadow, only the shadow of a shadow."

"That is true. He is without it. He is not a human man. You knew that?"

"I knew he was not quite. I do not understand your *tujuan*. Is it the soul?"

"No, Hans, that is the *semangat*. Everybody has a soul, a *semangat*, and nearly everyone has a *tujuan*. It is with you as when they send you somewhere, when they cut your orders. It is the orders themselves, the directions, the where you should go. It is the life you are here for all written fine on vellum made of the skin of the cuscus and rolled up fine as a pebble. Some say that this is placed in the brain under the lobe. Some say that it is placed in the liver which is the governor of the body. I myself believe it to be set in the diaphragm which is also the seat of the soul. But with your Finnegan it is *nowhere*. He has no direction. Why would he not be lost without a direction? He has not been given a *tujuan*.

“Almost always God remembers to give it to one. But sometimes he forgets. With Finnegan he has forgotten.”

So Sulem made a grandfather of Finnegan. “Hans,” he said, “that boy really needs a grandfather. He's split in two. I never saw a boy who needed a grandfather so bad. That boy's going to have trouble and this might be the only thing to save him. His way is down the road to ruin. He must somehow trick that ruin at the end.”

“But how do you know what my grandfather looks like?” Finnegan asked when he heard about it.

“This, Finnegan,” said Sulem, “I will have to dream what he looks like, and my uncles to help me to dream it too. After that, it won't be much of a trick.”

It wasn't much of a trick to make, but it didn't look like Finnegan's grandfather. It looked like part lizard and part toad. It wasn't pretty, but it had steady eyes and a lot of character, a sort of loathsome integrity.

“Sulem, that isn't my grandfather,” Finnegan insisted. “He was funny looking, yes, but that just isn't him.”

“No, Finn, it isn't a grandfather like that. But we use the word grandfather because we don't use the other word.”

Finnegan took a cup of water and baptized the thing Heliogabalus. He put it on a chain around his neck with the Miraculous Medal. He said that he had made a Christian out of the reptilian old Roman.

Heliogabalus was a canny monster, and he had a purpose in life and a place in the world. That was more than Finnegan had. He stayed with Finnegan to the very end: and, when found on him then, was believed to be of a different cultus. For the end of Finnegan was on another sort of island.

In those days Hans had exhilarating dreams of climbing. They were of several kinds: climbing up cliffs through a shower of arrows, climbing up the sides of buildings through pistol shot, climbing many thousands of feet on a great iron ladder hung in the sky. And climbing up ragged shafts in caves with the sunlight thousands of feet above.

This last had to do with climbing a giant spider's web. The threads of the web were cables eight inches thick; the climb was so high that the bottom of the shaft diminished to a point and then disappeared long before the center of the web was reached.

The red eyes of the giant spider shined like locomotive headlights; and when the spider moved the whole web shook with thunder. Still, the only thing was to go and get him. A lot of people who never tackled a giant spider don't know how much nerve it takes. The sword Hans had was a Roman sword; this seemed odd, for the spider belonged surely to an older myth, Greek or Hindu. The hairs on the spider's toes were thicker than most trees, and whether this was the

right or wrong place to start to kill a giant spider, a start must be made.

The climb on the iron ladder was the finest of all, though here the only danger was from the great height. This went up through the clouds till the earth could no longer be seen, up past the highest birds which (according to Vincent) might have been created in full flight only a moment ago. The golden eagles wheeled around Hans and fell away, and neither the top nor the bottom of the ladder could be seen, but only the sky above and below. This was perfection. This was achievement.

Hans climbed the iron ladder towards the sun. Hans was Apollo.

12.

"It doesn't look like there's even a tree on those islands," said Finnegan.

"You, Giovanni, are the perfect straight man," Hans told him. "I hoped you would say that. There is *not* a tree on those islands, or even a blade of grass. I am told by people who have been to both places that their surface most nearly resembles that of Mars. There is only vestigial vegetation. The islands are made of coral and limestone. Sea birds come here and build their nests. They build them up from their own effluvia and regurgitations. They gorge on fish, and then eat a little limestone to give it body. Then they bring it up again, and spread it, and let it harden. They make additional deposits. They build their nests that way, and the Chinese use them in soup."

These were the Talaud Islands, and they were four degrees North.

The sun went down and the moon came up on the finest night they had ever known at sea. In everyone's mind there is always one night remembered above all others for the beauty of it. The Dirty Five (being all of one mind) would all remember this one night.

Their wake was phosphorescent and shook out behind them like a bright green tail; the ocean smelled of iodine. They all slept on top deck except Casey who was slaving in the galley. And after midnight, the galley slave came up to join them. "It is the ship named *Argo*," Casey said, "for this night at least." Casey was a poetic one among them.

The war had ended now and they could smoke on deck at night.

13.

"You might as well not have any eyes as those two little red things," Hans told him one morning. "Can you see through them?"

"Yes. A little bit."

"From this side they're just a glaze. Who brought you home?"

"Vincent."

"We might as well bury you over here. I don't think you're going to make it. You wouldn't mind that, would you?"

“Not very much.”

A little later, Vincent and Finnegan went back into the jungle to find the snake that had bitten them. Sometimes this helps. Two little girls were building a shack.

“What is it going to be?” Vincent asked them.

“A cabaret, an American-style cabaret,” the smallest of the little girls said.

“When will it be finished?”

“An hour. All day maybe. Who can say when it's finished? You are our first customer so we are open for business. Go in and sit down.”

“How do we know where ‘in’ is?” Finnegan asked.

“Where the big box and the two little boxes are. They are the table and chairs. They are in. Who knows, we may later get other boxes.”

“What do you have to drink?”

“Oh, Four Feathers. Five Roses.” The whiskys really had such names. They were mild.

“What are your names?” Vincent wanted to know.

“Falo and Nauti,” said the little girl Falo. “And you are who?”

“Vincent and Finnegan. The nose is Finnegan.”

“This Finnegan is not a man,” said Nauti. “He is *tao-bunduk*, a mountain creature, an older creature. You laugh, the Vincent? No, really, your friend is not a man; he's another thing. You have not known it? They are in the stories.”

The young man Vincent and the young creature Finnegan sat on the boxes and watched the little girls work. It looked easy to put up a shack. Falo brought them a can of water to drink with the Five Roses. Vincent tried to take her by the waist, but she would not.

“Not touch, kid. Not do it once,” she said.

Finnegan tried to talk Tagalog. If Hans and Casey could talk it, why could he not?

“*Magkaano ito?*” he asked them.

“Not very much. You're our first customers. A peso a bottle,” Nauti told him.

“*Ano ang ngalan no?*” Finnegan asked.

“We told you already. My name is Nauti, Falo's name is Falo. Why to ask again?”

“That's the only other sentence I know.”

“We teach you to talk it right someday. All the words.”

“Are you going to have music in your cabaret?”

“Sure. My uncle in Batangas will bring us a piano Saturday if he can get a cart.

“Who will play?”

“I play, Nauti. Falo hasn't the talent. I have a harp at home, but it's hard to jazz a harp. The boys would want to handle it and might

break it."

"Do you have a pack of cards? Or is that allowed in your café?"

"I get them. Sure, everything allowed. The sky's the limit, as you say. What that mean anyhow? Here. Only the four of clubs and the six of diamonds are missing. And this yellow piece of paper is the four of clubs. It is written on it 'This is the four of clubs.' Here, I will write it in English also. And the white piece of paper is the six of diamonds."

"Gad, bilingual cards!"

Vincent played solitaire for a while. Finnegan was feeling much better now. He nibbled on the whisky with new confidence. He had looked the snake that bit him in the eye and found it a much smaller and milder snake than he had remembered.

"If you don't die before nine o'clock in the morning, it means that you're not going to die at all," he said. "A lot of time you can go on and live all day. Have you anything to eat, little F and N?"

"Bananas only."

"*Magkanno?*"

"A peso a dozen. We have to charge a peso for everything because we don't have any change. This is too low for some things and too high for others. Many, like yourselves I am sure, will insist upon paying more. This make up for the deadbeats, and some of the boys will want to tip us. We will pass the kitty after we have played the music. The bananas don't cost us anything and we get a peso for them. This is known as merchandizing."

The girls sat down with them on two chunks of wood and they played Robber Casino, the only game that they all knew. Falo always won. "I play with these cards since I was a little girl and I know them all," she said. "I bet it would help in poker. I will learn to play poker and if they let me use these old cards I bet I beat all the boys."

"I bet you could," said Vincent. "But, on second thought, you should never play poker. Every card you hold is reflected in your eyes."

"Is that possible? Optics I don't understand."

"Optics I'm not talking about."

Some time later the boys started to Tall Tree.

"Goodbye one time," Falo and Nauti told them.

"Why do you say 'Goodbye one time'?"

"If we say 'Goodbye all the time' that means you're not coming back."

14.

"There's a lot of nonsense about this age business," said Sammy, "not just personal age, but folk age also. And the most nonsense is about the ancient Orient. The Orient is very young; it is the West that is old. To be sure, the Chinese claim antiquity, but that is toy history,

like you Irish use, Vincent, when you claim back to the Milesians. In the East we do not really remember our own past, nor our monuments, which means that they are not really our own past. They belong to others. But you people are old and you were born old; you are all hairy old men.

"I don't believe that you are smarter than we are. I don't believe that you can learn faster. But you were born knowing more, and you were born with a background. And you are all a bunch of Alkies, and so am I when I'm with you. I have some odd centavos. Can we scrape up two pesos among us?"

They could. They got another bottle of Black Label.

"Drinking is more common in the West," said Sammy. "It is because you are not naturally gay that you drink so much. I have, by the way, made the acquaintance of a very close friend of yours. I have wondered why I never see him with you."

"Who?" Henry asked.

"Absalom."

"Oh Lord, not Stein," Casey croaked.

"Yes, Stein, one of the finest gentlemen I ever met: serious, dedicated, very kind, somehow as I believe Socrates would have been. Did you know that he is teaching several social classes in the school? It's open again, you know. I also am teaching there."

"Sammy, this is all wrong. Stein is no good."

"He warned that you especially mistrusted him, Casey. A prophet is not without honor, he says, save in his own group."

"Let us talk about something pleasant, like arson or mayhem."

So they drank and talked.

"The bottle is empty and we're all broke," said Hans.

"Don't worry, my little friends," soothed Sammy. "I show you how to con."

Captain Sammy left his cap on the table. Without it he was just a little Filipino boy in a suit of faded sun-tans. Sammy and Finnegan had a conference apart. Then Finn took out a mouth organ and walked behind a couple of shoeshine boys. He played, and they listened and watched him. He played 'A-Rang-Dang-Doo' and they watched him; and Sammy swiped one of their shoeshine boxes while they watched; he went away with it.

Finn played 'Way Back in the Hills', and 'The Wreck of the Old Ninety-Seven'. He played the 'Wabash Cannon Ball'. He played quite a while, maybe fifteen minutes. Sammy came back and set the shoeshine box behind the boys again. Then he came to the table.

"Four shines, four pesos. Why do Americans pay to have their shoes shined?"

Finnegan quit playing and came to the table too.

"Play some more, pal," said the shine boys.

"Not now, pals. After while." More whisky had been brought now.

"No arson, no mayhem," said Henry. "This is an art beyond. Let's all drink to Sammy the con man."

"Cheers!" Sammy offered. "I give better shines than the kids do, and I hate to see my friends go thirsty."

The boys hung a good one on that night and kept it up quite a while. Hans knew where there were two white horses in a field and he wanted to ride them. It was about a mile to the field. Sammy spent the last two pesos for another bottle to take along.

They sang as they went. The six of them walked arm in arm and took up the whole road, and it wasn't much of a road. There was a brief fight with another bunch of soldiers who didn't like to be crowded into the ditches, but Hans and Henry neutralized the opposition. Only Casey had a bloody nose.

"That is not bad, a bloody nose for Casey. If it had happened to Finnegan it would have been serious. Casey's nose isn't big enough to worry about," Henry said.

They left the road and went swinging through the jungle and the fields. And there were white horses in a field. Hans ran down the largest of them and stopped it. He seemed to spin it around by grabbing two handfuls of mane and digging in his heels. Hans was very powerful when the juice was in him. He mounted and rode the big horse till he was almost scraped to pieces by the low branches in the dark. He was happy. Everyone was happy, even Casey who still dripped blood.

(All these things, the shoeshine and whisky-con of Sammy, the battle in the roadway, the capturing and riding of the white stallion, were heroic labors appointed to the Argonauts and their company that they should do.)

They sat around in the tall grass and talked and sang. Then Hans would tear across the field to try to catch the horses again; but he was neither as steady nor as swift as he had been a little while before.

Sammy's eyes became dull and he hummed little songs. Finnegan played the mouth organ again, but this also was not too steady. Henry lay on his back with his hands under his head and smiled up at the stars. They drank the last bottle, happily passing it around in a circle as they sat in the grass, but nobody got up. Sammy went to sleep, and then Vincent. Casey went to sleep talking, and every few minutes he would say a few more words in his sleep.

Hans and Henry and Finnegan (the last survivors) shook hands solemnly in a queer three-way handshake. Henry said something about Three Against the World. Hans quoted 'where three men stand together are kingdoms less by three'. It was a serious rite as though a

mystic trio had been formed in the heart of the Dirty Five.

Henry was the last one awake and he finished the bottle. Then he talked, and not to himself:

“This also I will give up if You will have it. If You are not inexorable. I will give up many things if You will have them in exchange. But, after all, it is up to You.”

He was talking about his vocation. He lay back and went to sleep.

The six of them lay in the high grass in the little pasture on the edge of the jungle, and the two white horses were sleeping standing up nearby.

15.

“I am surprised that this has been ignored,” he told himself. “It is an important book. It should be right up there with Marx and Freud. All great books, of course, were written by Jews. But I bet this got rough treatment in its day. Christ was born into a very literate and urbane world, and this book is rough-hewn. It is actually more primitive than the Old Testament. A lot of it has an unworldly air about it.”

It interested him, but he had reservations about it. He still has most of them today.

16.

There should have been a way to test it here, for it seemed a perfect test plot. Were the soldiers in Ward Fourteen different from the soldiers and people elsewhere? And if different, did the difference consist of a defect or unbalance of any sort? Were the inmates of Ward Fourteen kin to gooney birds, and what was the degree of kindred? Was there really a silent wall between them and others?

“My case seems odd to them,” said Private Gregory. “They won’t admit it, but they don’t know what to make of me at all. I can’t start at the beginning. I don’t remember the beginning of my own story. The mind can recall only so much even of its own past. But the act is that I never seem to age. And after a few years in one identity it becomes embarrassing to me. I have no idea how long this has been going on.”

The Parakeet was also a phoney, for it called itself *malaki ibon*, big bird, but it was quite small. To call it *maliit ibon*, little bird, always brought from it an angry ‘*hindi,hindi*’—‘no, no, no’. It was a conceited bird too. It called itself *maganda* and it was not at all beautiful.

The Captain was unhappy. Private Gregory was his worst problem. He said that Gregory’s fantasies were due to too little sexual experience.

Martin Benning had left the ward after a few weeks, and Green had gone, and George Buckram and Howell. Amoy had died, despairing and alone and in horrible agony. Now there were not many of the old ones left. And the new ones were sullen and sickly and had no fire in them.

Chapter Three

Think of a Name

1.

"Salvatore."

"Henry F."

"Schultz."

"John G."

"Solli."

"John A."

(There was a little confusion along about here.)

"Stranahan."

"Vincent J."

"Szymansky."

"Kasmir W."

We are not sure that the response went just like this, but this is the way they should have gone. This is the way they were down on the checklist. Nobody was sure what had happened. Often another boy got into the alphabetical order of the Dirty Five. Soldiers with intervening S. names were sometimes with the battery. In the present case, though, there seemed to be one too few rather than one too many.

The checking officer would call the surname. The soldier would reply with his first name and middle initial, then shoulder his bag and go down the catwalk to the barge, being checked off as he passed. But someone was not with them on the barge. One of the soldiers had been flagged out of line.

The M.P. Sergeant groused at him for a while, then one of the lieutenants standing by, then a corpsman, then the battalion dentist who was serving as medical officer. Then there were so many of them that they had to pile into two weapons carriers and go back to headquarters.

"This is the silliest thing I ever heard of. Isn't it the silliest thing you ever heard of, Colonel?"

"Damned silly. If he was going to blow his top, why didn't someone know it. Why did he have to wait till the last minute just when everything was going so smooth?"

"You got jungle fever, boy? You nuts? What's your name? There some reason you don't want to get on that boat? What's your name?"

"It's because I forgot my name that all the fog's being raised."

"Boy, nobody forgets his name."

"I know. It's odd. I never did it before. I'll think of it in a little bit if you'll stop dogging me. I must have always known it until now."

"Are you tired, Sergeant?"

"Not real tired. Don't feel real bad. Not quite real. Not quite bad."

"Would you know your name if you heard it?"

"I'm not sure that I would. I must have heard it and not known it down at the dock when the ruckus started."

"Here are some names. Is yours one of these?" He recited half a dozen names.

"Yes sir," the Sergeant said.

"Yes sir what?"

"It is one of those names, sir."

"Well, dammit, which one? Are you playing a game?"

"No sir, I'm sure not playing a game. I'm more interested in this than you are. I am one of those names, but I don't know which one. They all seem to be part of me so much that I could as easy be one as another. If you let me get on the boat with the others I'll be all right. I can tell who I am by the one that's not there, and nobody will know that I slipped for a minute. Just let me on the boat with the rest and I'll be all right."

"You're going to stay right here till we find out what's the matter with you. You were close to a group, were you? What was the group?"

"It was called the Dirty Five. We were always together. We were unique in the world."

"Yes. If you are a sample, that's so. Do you speak Italian?"

"*Alquanto*."

"What?"

"Somewhat. I can get along in it."

"Polish?"

"*Niedobrze*, not real well. I can't tell by that. We were all of us educated and we liked to kick the dialects around. On one of the islands we had the Jojos talking Polish. They thought that it was English, and the Gorgios thought that the Polish the Jojos talked was some kind of Malayan dialect."

"The *what* thought?"

"The Gorgios, non-Romanies, outsiders, that disorganized part of the world not included in the Dirty Five."

"What would you teach the Jojos to say?"

"Oh, '*Jak sie masz*, Joe.' Things like that."

"Let me have a try at this, Colonel. You know, boy, what's likely to happen if we don't solve this damned quick?" —it was the Captain and he was not a likeable man.

"I probably won't get to go home on the ship."

"You think there is some hidden reason why you don't want to go home?"

"No. I think, doctor, captain, that psychiatry is for somebody else and not for me, and that my forgetting my name doesn't mean that I don't want to go home on the ship. You'll never know how I want to go home! I don't know why I forgot what my home is. I don't know

why I forgot what my name is: I think I can learn it again. I'm very good at learning names and it isn't as though it were completely strange to me. Let me get on the boat and I'm sure that I'll know it tomorrow."

But they did not let him get on the boat. They put him in the hospital, and they tried him again the next day. He knew his name then, but the Captain said that someone had briefed him on it.

"That's a crock," the Sergeant said. "I remembered it last night. I forgot it again, and then I remembered it just as you asked me. If you give me a chance I'll get where I can remember it every time."

The Captain stuck to his point that the Sergeant had been briefed. Then the Captain mixed him up and he forgot his name again. It was much worse than the day before. The Sergeant became worried and agitated. He looked as though he would crack if pushed hard. The Captain was an evil man and he smelled blood. He pushed him very hard. The hair rose on the back of the Captain's neck and his nostrils dilated as he went in for the kill. In five minutes he broke the Sergeant completely.

The Sergeant sobbed for a few seconds, and by that time the hatred and excitement in the Captain's face had been covered by a mask again. The Sergeant lifted his head and grinned crookedly at the Captain.

"I may not remember my own name, sir," the Sergeant said, "but I'm never going to forget yours. I'll remember it no matter what. Someday, Captain, after you die and go to Hell, you're going to hear somebody call your name. And it'll be me. And it will be as if you had only seemed to be in Hell before. I'll know your name, and the address will be easy, and I'll come down there and get you."

"I'll have you for that! You can be court-martialed!" the Captain shrilled.

"Court-martialed, Captain?" asked the Colonel. "For the kid saying he'll see you in Hell?"

"But he means it. Yes, court-martialed. He is threatening me, an officer. No, not threatening. He is showing disrespect for an officer."

"That's enough, Captain. The boy is sick, and I'm not so sure about you."

They took the Sergeant back to Station Hospital; he felt pretty good after he slept.

But the Captain worried unaccountably over the threat that the boy had made, and this worry never left him. And years later, after he had died and gone to Hell, not the least of his discomforts was the dreadful waiting for his name to be called by the boy who said that he would not forget.

The Sergeant thought about it but he couldn't decide. He himself was sane, and yet a misunderstanding had risen concerning him. Howell was moderately sane, but he suffered from logorrhea and he ignored whole aspects of the world. Gregory was sane except upon one point. If that one point about himself were allowed (and he should know more about it than anybody), then he was perfectly sane. George Buckram was sane except upon two or three points; Martin Benning was sound except on three or four; Green was off on less than half a dozen and these half-dozen held together logically. And none of them was really wide off.

And now consider the rest of the world. Consider it and be silent. Should Ward Fourteen be built to a length of a hundred miles on each side would it still be large enough to accommodate all the goonies in the world? The Sergeant figured on a piece of paper. No, it would not be large enough. That would figure out to more than a quarter of a million gooneys per square mile, too many for comfort.

The Sergeant decided that the soldiers in Ward Fourteen were not much different from soldiers and people elsewhere. They were held there because of misunderstanding, not because they were really different.

In Ward Fourteen, conversation was King. There was little else. All small things had been taken away, like the chessboard and the pieces. "—for who knows what form hyperphagia may take among these demented?" the evil Captain had asked.

"And all because one man swallowed one piece; no, not even a piece, a pawn," said Howell. The Captain was not well liked.

Howell talked a lot, as did Private Gregory. George Buckram liked to talk, and Martin Benning, and Green, and the Sergeant also.

"This is a contingent, a conditional universe," said Green. "Oh, it's real enough for the moment, and the moment is always given freely. It is like a closed-circuit electrical system. It is all held in being by a momentary-contact switch. Should the pressure on that switch be relaxed, then the closed circuit would be broken and would disappear; all the worlds would disappear. We have no guaranteed existence. God holds us in being from moment to moment. If God nods, we vanish. Be careful that we do not bore Him overmuch or He will nod."

"Can you prove this?" Martin Benning demanded.

"Of course I can prove it," said Green who was God. "I will relax but slightly, for the veriest instant, and all the stars will stagger; and the lights will dim here in Ward Fourteen."

"What? Are you God?" George Buckram asked with some unbelief.

"You did not know it? That accounts for the casual way you treat me."

"Go ahead, Green. Relax a little. Let us see you dim the Cosmos.

Go ahead.”

“Man, do not rush God! In a moment I do it, in a moment. Ah!”

The lights dimmed in Ward Fourteen, and perhaps all the stars staggered. And then the lights brightened once more.

“You saw the ward-boy go out to cut that compressor on,” Private Gregory charged. “You know it dims the lights for a minute every time it comes on.”

“That is true,” said Green who was God. “Should I create new furniture for every act of mine, or should I not employ the furniture I have already made? For I made both the compressor and the ward-boy and I will employ them as I will.”

3.

“Like the Wandering Jew?” asked Howell. “My six hundred and twenty-third subject of conversation, as you may have already guessed, is ‘The Wandering Jew, are there Others?’ I take it that is the case with you.” (Howell maintained that there were exactly one thousand subjects of conversation in the world, and he alone had them catalogued completely and correctly.)

“That is the case with me,” said Private Gregory. “I am glad that you understand. Well, I made one change in 1907. They had kept pretty careless records before then; and whenever anyone became suspicious about my age I explained it by a mix-up. Besides, my papers were lost twice, and each time I managed to lop a few decades off my proper age. During the Indian War my papers were lost, and during the Civil War.”

“That puts you quite a ways back,” the Sergeant said.

“I had been a Sergeant in the U.S. Army for a little over one hundred years continuously when I made the change in 1907,” Gregory told them. “In some ways, they were the happiest years of my life. I had been an army irregular several times before this tenure. The Army is a handy cloak for an affliction such as mine. If you can get transferred around every few years your non-aging is not noticed. And before that, I had gone to Sea for some centuries. Before that again I had my troubles, for it was hard to find a trade that allowed change and movement. Everyone had his place in the world. I was often under suspicion.”

“Let's come back to 1907. Maybe we can understand it better from this end.”

“That was the last time before the present episode that I changed my identity. I then sloughed off my hundred-odd years sergeancy and went AWOL. I made myself to be a boy of twenty years and some months. I picked several men of political color to curry and in a year's time I had an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy. I was a good student. I have always been a good soldier. And I had studied quite a

few books in the thirty thousand evenings of barracks, garrison, and field of my sergeancy, not to mention what I had picked up in previous centuries.

“Besides, I had a background of personal experience that few could equal. It was too easy. I had no wish to be prominent. I was commissioned in due time. My specialty became Army History; certainly nothing could be more obscure. I was an archivist. I passed many years so. I taught classes; I was the foremost expert in this most obscure fiend; I gave them verity. My monogram on the caltrop may be the least-known classic in the world. But I was the only man who had ever flung an old-style caltrop. By old-style I mean pre-Civil-War. Yes, yes, I was eminently obscure. It was almost perfect, almost.”

“Then, in your career of sorts you began to run into trouble?” Green prodded.

“Yes, even in such obscurity as I had it began to close in on me. I would gray my hair, but it was always black to the roots. I cultivated a frown and put on weight but I could not age myself. I finally drew the attention of a cursed army doctor who was interested in aging.

“He was going to make some exhaustive studies of me. It would have been bad. I wouldn't have liked it. I know how these things work. If he had published that my true age was only twenty, after my being an officer in the army for nearly forty years, they would not look askance at him; they would look askance at me. They would not think that he was crazy. They would think that I was crazy.”

“So at an age of fifty-seven you made your escape again?”

“Yes. And almost got away with it. As an Aussie private of twenty I could have gone along for several decades, not necessarily remaining an Aussie. I can with equal facility be many things. But to be trapped in an army booby-hatch is too confining. They may keep me under observation for years.

“I have tried telling them the truth; I have tried various sets of lies; but they will not let me go. When they discovered (how, I do not know) that the fingerprints of a young Aussie Private were the same as those of an elderly American Colonel who had disappeared, there was bound to be some questioning.

“There is also the fact that they found among my old papers an unpublished monogram ‘Cycle of Subversion: the Hidden Hand in the Various Military Intelligences’ and this has roused the fury of those it uncovers. They would hunt me down. And they have found me but they not believe that it is me. It puzzles me that I should live life after life. I do not believe that it happens to many others.”

“It puzzles me also,” said the Sergeant, “that you should string them out, live them one after another. Myself, I always live several lives simultaneously. I don't know which way is best, or worst.”

It told stories, but Ignatius Ti had to translate them. Ignatius was a Christian Chinese of a family that had been in the islands for centuries. He was employed as a ward-boy.

Tagalog-Parakeet is a very compressed language, and three or four words of it will commonly translate out into many paragraphs.

"Gusto ko ng isda," said Amoy. Amoy was the parakeet.

"He says that before he was a bird he was a fish," Ti translated. "But before he was a fish he was a bird again, a crow or a blackbird. Isn't that right, Amoy?"

"Pula," said Amoy.

"He says that he was a red-winged blackbird," Ti translated freely. "He was a thief and he worked for thieves. When he was young he was very poor and the thieves he worked for were poor. He stole millet; just a few grains were all that he could carry at one time to his masters. It was hard work with countless trips, and if he stole less than a peck a day he was beaten. After that, he stole rice for rice thieves. Later yet he stole coriander seeds, and dates: still later, figs and olives. But this was all preparation.

"The year that he reached his majority he ran away and accepted a position with some jewel thieves in Karachi. He would fly into the shops very quietly. He would fly out of the shops still more quietly, and richer by the weight of the gems that he could carry.

"Ordinarily, fancy birds had been used for this work: golden pheasants and peacocks and lyre birds. These were conspicuous, and for a long time they had been watched closely. Nobody suspected a red-winged blackbird. Also Amoy was smarter than the fancy birds. This is something that is not largely known, but the Bird of Paradise and also the Golden Pheasant are low-grade morons. They can hardly tell an obvious fake from a real gem, and they will pick up a flawed stone as readily as a perfect one.

"But Amoy never made a mistake. He prospered and so did his masters. But it happened that the next spring he fell in love with a common magpie."

"Hindi bastos. Pinakamabuti," Amoy said angrily.

"He says that she was not common," Ti translated. "She was an uncommon magpie of the common species. They were married, and soon she was *buntis*. It was then that Amoy decided that he must give her a beautiful gift.

"On the very next haul he found what he wanted. It was a blue diamond as big as an almond. He swallowed it first. Then he swallowed the rest: star sapphires, lesser opals, things like that; many of the gems he knows only by their Arabic or Hindi names which I am unable to translate. With the loot, Amoy flew back to his master, Ali

ben Taife, also known as Lord Peter Petrof, and as County von Vinger, and in Rio as Senhor Dedos (which is to say, also, Mr. Fingers). And as always, when he arrived before his master, Amoy began to resurrect the gems.

"He regurgitated the star sapphires, he regurgitated the lesser opals, and the other gems which he knows only by Arabic and Hindi names. But he would not bring up the blue diamond. It had become attached to him.

"I leave it to the analysts who run in and out of here like mice whether this attachment was of a physical sort or was something mental due to a trauma caused by the uncommon magpie. Secretly he wanted it for his wife. He refused to bring it up for Ali ben. He was threatened. He was put to the torture.

"However, to save his life (and it was precisely a case of that) he could not bring it up. Then Lord Peter (Ali ben) cut his throat and had it anyhow.

"He died after that (Amoy), (Lord Peter died twelve months later), and turned into a fish (Amoy). Lord Peter turned into a donkey and is today pulling rocks on a little cart in the same mine whence the blue diamond came.

"I have to go to work now, but Amoy will tell you the story of the time he was a fish. If there is any part of it that you cannot understand, I will explain it when I am here again."

"ISDA," said Amoy after Ignatius Ti was gone, and that was the entire story of the time he was a fish. If it could be translated out of Tagalog-Parakeet, it would be an interesting story.

Amoy did not like his name, which means stink. But it had now become an apt part of him, as Amoy had a high old odor and was a sick and dying bird.

His sickness had been caused by a sadistic medico who had given him a caustic poison to see him writhe. Amoy suffered horribly; they said that when he belched, he belched fire. But he was tenacious of life though his insides were eaten away. He was also under exterior sentence of death and an official order had gone out to kill that stink bird. But he took to the trees when danger came and only entered the ward late at night to talk to his friends.

Amoy was not really a psycho. He was possibly the best-balanced one in the ward. His delusions of persecution were not delusions; he *was* persecuted. His unpopularity was not imagined; he *was* unpopular. Even among his friends he was unpopular, but he tried to be cheerful.

5.

"Captain, I've had a lot of that," Gregory said, "though most of it

not very recent. The other night I counted up thirty wives and only went back about five hundred years. My experience has never been intensive, but it has been very extensive. Except for possibly other long-lived individuals like myself, I've probably had more experience than anyone in the world."

This always made the Captain very angry. He did not like to be contradicted. The basic thing about Gregory he believed to be a fallacy, and Gregory knew it to be fact. They would never be able to get together.

After he left Gregory in an angry mood, the Captain always started on Howell. This was unfortunate, for the Captain and Howell were a little alike (both had the talking disease), and they might have got along if the Captain hadn't always been angry at the start. But then Howell had a theory about doctors that might have precluded any sympathy from the Captain. (It won't be given here: it's true of no more than half of the doctors.)

The only thing wrong with Howell was that he had developed an odd twitching and quivering in his left hand which had been spotted in his final physical examination. As no physical reason could be found for it, it was assumed that it was mental. And as he tried with gentle humor to soothe the fury of the myopic analysts, they decided that the man was completely over the hill, humor being beyond the brotherhood.

The Captain said that Howell's twitching was due to too little sexual experience.

"Hell, Captain, I used to be a rake," Howell said, "and after that I had the liveliest wife in the world. If Gregory's experiences have been extensive, mine have been intensive."

"Repression somewhere, that's sure. The main thing is to do away with all repression, at least as far as your left hand is concerned. Do not deny your left hand anything."

"Can I let it know what my right hand is doing?"

"That is an odd question and I don't quite understand it. Do you personify your left hand in that manner as though it had a separate intelligence? Interesting. You are farther gone than I thought. But do not deny your left hand anything."

Howell reached out with his left hand and jerked three hairs from the Captain's little moustache, which exactly decimated it. The Captain was displeased, and the twenty-seven remaining hairs of the moustache twitched and bristled. He was in danger of getting a complex himself.

After this he started on the Sergeant. He did the same things in the same order every day, coming to Howell when he was angry with Gregory, coming to the Sergeant when he was still angrier with

Howell.

"What is your name today?" he always demanded. "Well, speak up, quick, quick, is it Salvatore, Schultz, Solli, , Stranahan, Szymansky?" Every day he threw names at the Sergeant, but mostly they were the same five or six.

"Do I have to choose one of those?" the Sergeant asked. "Can't I be someone else?"

"Those are what you call the Dirty Five. Did you not say that you were one of the Dirty Five?"

"I'm not sure that I did and I'm not sure that I am. If I have to start all over why can't I be someone new? You asked me once if I identified myself with any of them, and I seemed to identify myself with all of them."

"Don't play games with me. You have to learn your name. This name forgetting comes from insufficient sexual experience."

"Then I can't be Salvatore, can I?"

"Salvatore, was he much of a one? Tell me about him. How was Salvatore?"

"Oh, put your little hot eyes back in your head, Captain. I just don't want to pick a name today."

The Captain could get no cooperation. He went back to his tent to add to his notes on the three cases. And the three cases compared their notes on him.

Private Gregory was a large handsome man with a skull the size and shape of a big pumpkin, and of a purplish hue. This is not at all contradictory. On him the thing looked good. He was a man who would always be noticed and it is understandable that he would have trouble being obscure. But his solid size and his purple dome were places to start. They were real.

"If I am Henry," thought the Sergeant, "then Gregory is very large, for he is larger than I am. And if I am not Henry but some one of the others, then Gregory is still large, but not so large as if I were Henry."

The boys had been telling ghost stories in the ward, and Private Gregory told diabolical stories for he said that ghosts were the same as devils.

"The perfect ghost story is the story of Possession," he said, "and that is hypnotism from beyond the grave. This is possible since hypnotism is by the will, and the will is immortal. A number of notable men have been possessed, and all of their lives seem to fit a pattern: the inconsequential early years, the hiatus when they stood where Faust stood, and the decision. And then the rise to power and influence and almost universal honor after they have made the deal. But it is not themselves, it is the devils within them that gain these things. They are the possessed men who do much of the running of the

world, and theirs is the most frightening story that can be imagined. But those who watch the great men do not know that they are shells inhabited by ghosts."

"The ghost story is simply the horror story," Howell said, "one that raises the human hackles. Now, what are the horrible things? The devils, as you say; the darkness itself; a dead man. And the most grisly of all is the dead man, for that is the familiar gone horrible. A dead man come back to life, a corpse sitting up—that is the cream of a ghost story. It is so horrible that it must be blended with humor to be bearable, and as such it is the essence of a thousand Irish wake stories.

"Why should a dead man returned to life be more terrible than a simple live man? He should be doubly the object of affection and reverence, clothed with the mystery of the other world, a joy returned to take the place of the grief of parting. That is not the case, however. Most people are afraid of a dead man returned to life."

"The horror of the ghost goes back to the early anti-Christians," Gregory interrupted. "I can remember in the Roman days when those anti-Christ stories were made to scare us. This was the stumbling-block of the new religion, and its enemies made much of it.

"Consider this to a contemporary who had not the Grace. Here was a man murdered and mangled, wrapped and buried, and the tomb sealed on a Friday night. And on Sunday morning he rises from the dead and walks the earth as a two-day old corpse and tells people he has been in Hell.

"This was the bogey man of the small Roman children of the Empire: the dead man who breaks out of the grave and comes through closed doors in the middle of the night."

Gregory himself was like a purple ghost in the dim light, and he gave a creepy feeling when he talked like that.

"You boys have talked long enough," said Ignatius Ti the ward-boy. "I was sent to tell you to shut up, but first I will tell you a story. I will tell it at once as I must go on duty at midnight and there is barely time. First I will tell you why midnight is the spook hour.

"I come from an island south of here and this was the practice: when a man is sick and has to die it is made known to him, so he decides to die at midnight, and he does die then. This is so he will not be alone when he goes, as several others in the world will die at the same time and keep him company. When it is midnight and the souls pass over, there is a hole in the veil for a moment. Then, if one of the old dead is nimble, he can pass back to the world by the same hole. At midnight I always notice a restlessness even here among you cuckoos, although there are not so many die here now as earlier. You do not like to be left alone in the dark as you all have half a ghost inside you.

"It bothers me myself who am ordinarily so fearless. Corpses must

sometimes be kept here overnight, and usually they are wheeled into one of the supply rooms. Always it is dark there, and when I am sent in to get supplies I have qualms. What if the dead man should sit up indeed. I lift the sheet sometimes and look under. I cover him casually, then rapidly rip it away again to see if I can catch him with his eyes open.

"Another thing I would like to tell you if you are around dead men much: never turn your back on them. Should a casual bottle of pills drop from one of the shelves and shatter on the rocks, you will always think that the dead man did it. Should a bedpan fall on your head, you will think that the dead man threw it at you. If a gecko or other lizard drop on your shoulder, you will think that it is the hand of the dead man himself.

"There is another hazard, the jokers. There is never a new ward-boy who does not have jokes played on him. He will be sent into a room at night where there is a presumed corpse, sent there for something trivial. But it will not be a real corpse there. It will be a medico full of stolen alcohol and in the mood to play a trick. Then, when your back is turned, he will rise from the dead and pinion you. The heart turns to ice when this happens. This passes for humor among the medicos.

"There is a cure for it which a friend of mine practiced. He was my predecessor on this job. When this happened he was cool. 'I always said that the doctors should make sure of their dead,' he'd remark. 'Even a pig you cut the throat of it.' Then he'd deliver a terrific chop to the esophagus of the medico joker, and at the same time he'd flip open his flip-knife. The medico would think that his throat was already cut, for a blow to the esophagus is the same as having the throat cut for a moment. My friend had a cast in one eye and had a sinister look when he blazed at one in the darkness. Medicos also can be frightened.

"However, to my story. Our friend Howell has said that the most horrible things are corpses that sit up. If this were so, then there would be much horror with my people, for all the corpses sit up. They are propped up at the wake and are buried sitting up. The horror is not in corpses that sit up but in corpses that go to bed.

"But this is the story: There was a young wife, and her husband came to her one night and went to bed. 'Why, what is the matter with your side?' she asked. 'There is a big hole in it. It is as if a knife had gone in,' she said. 'No. I just scratched it on a rock when I was diving,' the husband said. 'It is quite a small hole. You know everything seems bigger in the dark.'

"She thought no more of it, and in the morning he was gone. It was then that friends told her that robbers had killed her husband the

day before with a knife in his side and had left him under the trees in a far place. It had been his ghost that she slept with and she had not known it. It frightened her when she thought of it. That is the story.”

“Is that all?” Green asked.

“Sure that is all. It's a good story. Anybody can have a story of a ghost that sits up. I've got the only story of a ghost that goes to bed. It has build-up and suspense, then a quiet climax. And the after-effect hits you—Whammo I believe is the word.”

Ignatius Ti had to leave to get his bedpans and go to work. It was midnight, and a few loose ghosts came through the hole in the veil and wandered into the psycho yard. They were at home here, and they sat on the feet of the cots and mingled in with the thoughts of the boys.

6.

One day a Malayan boy came in and called the Sergeant by name and told him that it was time for him to go home.

“It's an odd thing that you know my name,” said the Sergeant, “when I don't know it.”

“You have been in the Green Islands long enough, Sergeant. It's time you grow up.”

“I had thought that I might stay here. To me they are like the Garden. If I leave them, there is nothing left but the World.”

“Maybe you can come again someday, and maybe they will be nearly the same. But they are not the garden. Now we will have a high old time of it once more, and then you will have to go home.”

They were drinking jungle juice out of a gourd which was not ordinarily done in the ward. But they were not now in that ward, nor even on that island.

They had left another and earlier island and now they were on the continent. They were walking down a street of Sydney and they came to the Plaza Hotel. “I cannot go in here with you,” the boy said, “but you go in and see your old friends, and I will go to the Indonesian Club for a few snorts. Then we will go in a canoe to another place.

The Sergeant went into the Plaza and had gin drinks with Tom Shire and Freddy Castle. Tom was small and dark where before he had been large and fair; but there was no other change in either of them, and they remembered him well.

They met three red-headed girls named Moira Monroney, Rosemary Riorden, and Minnie McGinty. They swizzled drinks and became friendly. They all made remarkable jokes, and the Sergeant sat on Rosemary's lap for a long while.

“You and your friends are in legend,” Rosemary said, “and you yourself are from the first Illyria. You are the son of Aeson a demiurge, though you believe his name to have been Giulio and

himself a slob. Your companions are Orpheus, Peleus, Euphemus, and Meleager. At a later time you will companion with the Dioscuri. You will plant a field with dragons' teeth against your will. You will be loved by the daughter of Aeetes in her various forms (and I am one of those forms). And you will find the fleece and not know that you have found it.

"But you will never return in the flesh to the City of Iolcus."

Later they went walking in the town and they passed an alley named Oswald Lane.

"Sometimes when you go by it, it isn't here at all," Rosemary told the Sergeant, "and if you do down it, sometimes you come out in Darlington, and sometimes in London. It gets foggy now. Quickly, mount on my shoulders or you will stick to the pavement."

The Sergeant did so. Had he not, he would have been stuck to the pavement by the fog, and he would have perished there and lived no more of any of his lives. By such slender things are we sometimes saved.

"Remember that the herb Rosemary is the specific against sticking to the ground in a fog," Rosemary Riorden said. "Use it whenever you are in danger."

After that (probably quite a while after that, for they were back in the islands), the Sergeant went out from coral reefs with the Malayan boy, and they dived from the canoe and swam under the water.

"What is the name of the canoe?" the Sergeant asked.

"It is named *Aral* or 'hindrance'," the Malay boy said, "it is named *Bumi* or 'of the world'. It is named *Aragh* or 'the direction'." So the Sergeant knew that it was the ship *Argo*.

They swam underwater for a long time and it was unbelievably wet. Sea water isn't very wet, even for water. There are other things wetter than water.

Rubbing alcohol is wetter, and that's what it was. It was high noon in the ward.

"What other kinds of noon are there?" the Sergeant asked aloud.

"I don't know, Sarge. What other kinds of noon ARE there?" the brown ward-boy asked him. "Were you talking to me or to yourself?"

"I'm not sure."

The Sergeant had had a little fever and they had given him a rub-down. He hadn't been asleep, but he had been noon-dreaming there as he watched the sun and the shadows.

This daydream was the only time in his life that he ever met Moira Monroney and Rosemary Riorden and Minnie McGinty, and yet they had been pretty good friends and he would always remember them. He supposed that they, in their own way, would always remember him also.

The Sergeant told everybody that he was all right now and that he ought to go home. This took a little while, for his reputation was against him.

However, it was soon noticed that he was in fact all right. It was another two and a half weeks, but then he was on his way.

In the ward, he left only Private Gregory of his old friends who seemed destined to live forever, and who was mighty tearful that it would be forever in that ward.

But after all this one is about Vincent; the rest were only in town to see him get married.

Everyone was in town. Hans and Marie had decided to live there. They had taken an apartment, and Mary Catherine (Casey's girl) was staying with them.

Patrick Stranahan was a big hairy man. He rumbled when he talked; he even rumbled when he didn't talk. He had a large busy stomach and there was always something going on in there. His face was like blue emery paper, and he had so much body hair that in trunks from a distance he looked like a Negro.

"You will have to help me with the wedding, Maurine," said mamma Monica. "Nobody will help me. We don't even know who's coming to the reception. Teresa didn't use the invitations I had printed. She wrote hers all out on the backs of old Star and Garter programs and sent a sandwich-board man around to deliver them. Would you believe it?—she actually had an advertisement for the wedding

printed on the sandwich-board. It said 'Come one, come all'. What if everybody did come?"

The only explanation is that Finnegan was a complete fool, and later collateral evidence proves that this is the true answer. Dotty was magnetic, she was marvelous. There wasn't a man who didn't come to life when she was in the room. She was as large a girl as Marie, and had chestnut hair that would haunt you. She was smarter than the rest of them, and amazingly kind.

Finnegan and Teresa were together for the first time late Wednesday afternoon. And about them was *baleno* invisible, ball-lightning.

Patrick Stranahan talked with Papa Piccone and Father McGuigan and his brother-in-law Charley Murray late one night.

Vincent was scared the night before. "I don't want to get married. I never got married before. Let's you and me catch a freight train, Finnegan, and go away."

"Uxor tua sicut vitis abundans in lateribus domus tuae."

Chapter Four

Stranahan, Who Is Meleager

1.

I fled from the hall of the doer and driver
And traded it all for the life of a Fiver.
With Hans I was kin where the hazard was racey,
I fiddled with Finn and companioned with Casey;
I handled the helm in the dragon-back denry,
And rode in the realm of the Emperor Henry.
We owned a Sea-Kingdom, and all of us regend
(You know naught of that who ne'er lived in a legend),
Discovering valleys and skerries in sky-lands;

In weird Archipelago, we were the Islands.
We coasted in quest of auriferous cargo,
And sailed on the ship that was anciently Argo.
Our motto: *Aquilae congrégabunt dumque*
In nostrum memoriam quotiescumque.
Were ghosts to be grappled and coney to cozen,
We chose us the life that's only for the Chosen.
I skirted the dead-falls whose covert is birchen,
Yet beached like a bream in the net of the Urchin.
Nor spurned I my brothers nor voided my visa,
'Tis but that a Farer will find a Theresa.
Returning I empty the bolts from my quiver
And live in the world, in the Town on the River.

— *Lines written on back of an insurance policy by Vincent Stranahan*

When Finnegan got off the train in St. Louis, he was met, not by Vincent as he had expected, but by Dorothy Yekouris his old girl from New Orleans.

His feelings when he saw her at a distance were not what he expected, nor was he able to explain them. His heart ran faster than normal. His breathing was difficult. He was stunned by the wonderful appearance of her, and, before he had control of himself, he felt that his hands shook.

These symptoms have been correlated with the sudden vision of a long-loved one, the fruition of nostalgia, the final climaxing of desire... But they are also the symptoms of sheer terror. But Dotty was pleasant and kind and intelligent, and she loved him. And also, she was suddenly alien to him.

As they came towards each other, Finnegan had the feeling that he was lost in a wrong world and that he had never seen this lovely stranger before. He was honestly not sure for a moment who she was. He was seeing something not meant for himself, he was eavesdropping on himself inside his own body, seeing with his eyes and feeling with his senses, all with the impression that he was a stranger inside. Often Finn felt that he was inhabiting a stranger without real familiarity with the body and brain he looked out from. When Finnegan was not himself, it had a special meaning.

For he was Finnegan of the Two Lives, a story and character out of the Taine. Whoever he was himself, he felt a little amused and quite a little sorry for this confused Finnegan person he inhabited. And he was not ready to admit that the person was himself.

They kissed warmly and they gazed at each other: for this was the new meeting of Dotty and Finnegan.

"I was worried that you wouldn't come home, Finn," Dotty told him. "You needn't be afraid. I won't trap you unless you want it."

"I was worried too, Dotty. I didn't know where home was; I may not know now. They had me in a joker-camp for a while, and they evicted me even from there. The show split up and I couldn't find myself in the pieces. But I used to think about you. Then I'd think, What if I go back to her and when I get there I won't know her? What if there isn't any Dotty? I knew many people well who weren't. What if I forget what she looks like?"

"In a way, dear, you couldn't forget," Dotty said, "you never knew. You always looked at me as though I were someone else. We needn't make hard work of this, Finn. Many others don't hit it off perfectly. Maybe we expect too much, but I'd give a lot to make it work. I will still be Dotty: I can't be anyone else. Will you come back to New Orleans with me next week?"

"Yes, of course I will come. I don't know anywhere else to go, Dotty, or anyone else to go with. If I can't find it with you, where can I find it?"

Dotty hugged him. This is more momentous than it sounds. Dotty was strong as a bear. She wasn't beautiful; but she was better looking than a lot of beautiful girls. Unless you know Dotty, you won't understand this. And if you don't understand it, it is difficult to grasp the rest. But when Dotty hugged it was electric.

"It's very peculiar," Finnegan said, and he was shaken, "but I miss you more when you're here than when you're gone." Now that was only a little thing to say, and there was no reason for Dotty to go white when she heard it or to gasp as though she had been struck.

"I wish you hadn't said that, Finn. I know what you mean and you don't. I'm sorry that I'm not different. Most wouldn't want me different."

And now Finn saw Vincent and Hans and Casey and went toward them. Dotty cocked her head to one side and watched as he joined his friends.

"You banana-nosed brat," she said, "you just don't know what you're missing. Oh my God, how will I ever show you! I wonder if I'll ever be able to bring you to it. If I can't, then nobody else can."

It still had every chance of going. Why, it had really only begun.

And yet in a way it had ended there.

2.

Vincent J. Stranahan was born in St. Louis on April 5, 1921, the son of Patrick J. Stranahan and Monica (Murry) Stranahan. His brothers were Philip, Hugh, and Timothy Navisius; his sisters were Norma and Maurine.

Patrick J. was an attorney and a successful one. He was an extremely brilliant man, but for purposes of business he hid the fact and settled for being a very proficient and understanding man. His

sons all resembled him, and it was expected that they would also be brilliant and that they would have the good sense to hide it.

Vincent narrowly escaped being tagged as a 'good' boy. He was a little of a clown and he escaped it by that. Unlike the others, he was never brilliant though he had often given promise that he might become so. This was later given up on. Besides, it wasn't really needed; there was enough brilliance in the family in the three elder sons. They were a close-knit bunch and there would always be enough of everything.

Vincent might have done better if he'd had it harder, but he did well as it was.

Teresa Antoinette Piccone (Show Boat) was born on October 15, 1923, also in St. Louis. Her father, Gaetano, the proprietor of the Star and Garter, acted by reason of this a role broader than life until this role was part of him. As a show-off, he was nearly on par with his daughter.

The mother of Teresa was a Panebianco and her name was Marie Caterina.

Gaetano was probably not rich, but he did own a valuable piece of property in the theater. He could have sold the building and the corner and lived his life out on what it would bring, but he would rather keep the show. He was flamboyant and a gambler, and he loved to flash sheaves of hundred dollar bills.

Teresa (Show Boat) cannot be described directly. She must be caught a little bit at a time. Well anyway, she was dark and lithe and probably little. She wasn't very pretty but nobody cared about that. She sure could make the pretty girls turn green.

Vincent and Show Boat were to be married on the last Saturday of May of 1946. That was the reason for the gathering of the Dirty Five and their friends in St. Louis. It was to be a big event.

It would be bigger if Show Boat could have her way: an epic, a pentagamion. She thought that everybody might as well get married. She was hurt at the way these people kept talking their way out of it. Marie and Hans had the only legitimate excuse: they were already married.

There was a rift, well not a rift, a hesitation between John Solli (Finnegan) and his girl Dotty. This was like other rifts. There had been no sharp words between them. Never as long as they lived would even one sharp word pass between them.

Dotty (Dorothy Mary Yekouris) had come to town from New Orleans and was living with Show Boat. The daughter of a printer, she was raised in the trade: then took up bartending also when the trade did not provide. A secret intellectual who narrowly missed being a rogue, she had much faith in her ability to run the world. She had no

faith at all in those who were running it.

But now she was doubtful and worried. "I have a job cut out for me, Teresa," she said. "That little banana-nose might just go over the hill. He will try to drink up everything in the world; and worse, he will have to see everything in the world, though he has no idea at all what he is looking for. We had a calf like that once when I was little. We bought him at an auction. He had been taken from his mother and was a long ways from home. He would break out of every fence we had and go wherever he saw cattle. It wouldn't take him long to find that there was nothing there he wanted. He'd go through more fences and visit all the other bunches. He had surely forgotten what he was looking for, but he never did stop breaking out and wandering. We had to butcher him."

"That might be the best thing to do with your boy, Finnegan."

"Yes, I've thought of that too. I've thought of everything. Oh, I'd have him all right, and I'd take care of him when he's around and try to keep track of him when he's roving. But I don't know if I can settle him down."

"A lot of the boys will be like that for a while. Then I think they'll settle."

"I hope. The other four will settle down. I don't think Finn ever will."

"Does he drink more than the others?"

"Probably. Or he does it differently. I can see all the way down the road for him and I try to help him. I knew him well before the war. He drank. I was a barmaid and he was my customer. But he wasn't trapped then."

"But from one of his letters that I had from overseas I knew that he'd changed. Or perhaps I realized that I didn't really know him very well. His drinking is only incidental to his being lost. His letter didn't mention drinking, I don't even remember what it said, but it told me in one sentence that he was getting lost."

"*Diavolo*, Dotty, nobody's lost. Come on and get married with us."

"Look at him, Teresa, sometime. You know he isn't ready."

"But Dotty, I haven't met him yet. Something is wrong. Two days he's in town and I haven't seen him. It's mighty peculiar that I haven't seen him."

It would be a lot more peculiar [when she did](#).

"It's just the way it's happened, Teresa," Dotty said. "Today you'll see him for sure. He's very curious about you. I can feel it."

"I had a letter from him once, Dotty, and it made my flesh creep clear off my bones. It gave me the weirdest feeling, as though he were someone I had loved a long time ago and forgotten. How could I forget anyone I had ever loved?"

Mary Virginia Schaeffer, one of the sweetest persons in the world, stayed with Show Boat also, and seemed happy about anything that Henry might decide. She was Henry's old girl from Morgan City, Louisiana.

Finnegan and Henry and Casey stayed with Vincent. And Stein was in town.

And also, down from Chicago, came the semi-fabulous Melchisedech Duffey, beard and all. He was a patriarch without seed, a prophet without honor, a high-sounding brawler. He knew everything, of course, but that was no special achievement. A lot of them knew everything. But people did look at him and turn at the sound of his voice, which was Boston Irish with just a touch of stage Yiddish mixed in.

There were parties for a week. To Finnegan now a party was always a tavern party. His main drinking partner, Vincent, was often occupied with lesser things. A man hasn't too many duties before his wedding, but he has some.

Hans was much on business in the daytime, visiting banks, seeing builders and promoters and suppliers. It was so bad that it would sometimes be nine or ten o'clock in the morning before Finnegan could line up a drinking party. Then it might be the now-thoughtful Henry or the strangely soured Casey. Duffey might be along, or the ubiquitous Stein. Later in the week, Show Boat.

"It's my bachelor week too," she would say. But Monica Stranahan did not approve of her being always out drinking with the boys, especially in the mornings.

Dotty liked to go along, but she felt that she might worry Finnegan. Mary Catherine (Casey's girl) loved to live it up, but she had a mysterious feud with Casey. No one was getting along with his proper mate.

This morning, the Tuesday before the wedding, it was Mary Virginia Schaeffer, Mary Catherine Carruthers, Finnegan, Henry, and Duffey who were riding around in Mary Schaeffer's car. They were across the river and into Illinois and visiting all the little towns, stopping out of courtesy at a tavern of each.

"What is it with Casey now, Duff?" Henry asked. "You and Mary Catherine know him better than anyone. Has he really gone off the deep end? You treat him like dirt, Mary, as though he had crucified Christ all over again."

"He is planning on doing just that, Henry, but the price has gone up since the first time. He gets a good subsidy from someone."

"How can the force him into it?" Henry asked. "A little blackmail never hurt anyone."

"It isn't that now, Henry," said Duffey, "though it started that way. Casey believes the stuff now. He had it all down perfect. He already knew it: he didn't have to learn it. He had studied it while his eyes were still open; and when he switched, it moved in on him with its complete logic. He is intelligent enough to know that there is no place in between, even though most of the world stands in the middle like a herd of foolish colts."

"Has he left the Church?"

"No. It would be better if he did," said Mary Catherine. "That's the devil in him. And his value to Them would be less if he left. He's going to identify the *Crock* as a Liberal Catholic magazine and use it as a setting for their handouts and quotations. I don't know how he can stand it. I can't influence him. Neither can Duffey."

"Are you going to give him the magazine, Duff?"

"He has it now. He's taken it away from me. It is mostly his money in it. I will have to start another one and fight this thing a little tighter."

"Why does he still hate Stein, if Stein is really one of them?"

"Curiously, Stein has shown signs of switching too. He was in as deep as you can get and it's dangerous for him to leave it; but there is a chance that he will, or that he has. You see, Stein is really decent. He was born in the Party, just as we were born in the Church. He is being torn apart too, but he isn't as transparent as Casey."

They circled back towards the City and stopped in one more little town. The tavern had just opened. It was really a roadhouse. They played the music box: 'Seems Like Old Times' and 'It's a Great Big World'. The five sat at one of the tables.

"What can you do, Finnegan?" Duffey asked him. "Have you a trade?"

"Lots of them, and also an art, arts. I'm one of the most talented artists anywhere."

"I get a little bored with this bright brittle talk," Duffey growled. "You seem to learn it from each other, all of you."

"I wish that were all it was," Finnegan said sadly. "I wish I were not quite so good, so I could joke about being great. This isn't something I want. It scares me to death. I know how Henry felt when his Vocation came to him. There's a wild rush to be rid of the thing. This came to me a long time ago but I didn't accept it. I still don't. I'll run from the thing, I'll be out from under it, I'll lose it. Why is it given to fools anyhow? There are so many better men who could use it better: I can only misuse it when I use it at all. Did you ever pray at night that you would wake up in the morning and no longer have a special gift?"

"Yes, I'm also a fool who's been given more than I know how to

handle,” said Duffey. “But I don’t run away from it, though it’s true that I botch it. But aren’t you going to work, Finnegan? You should.”

“I’ll wait till I run out of money. I’ve worked on river barge-trains and could still get on. And I can ship out of New Orleans. My Merchant Marine papers are in order. I’ve done bartending, but if I do that I should do it with Dotty. She has the money saved and a place ready to be bought. I think she’s going to buy it, with or without me. Now she says that she has another idea that will amaze me and that it will be revealed in all good time. But if I go in with her, my mind will be made up for me.”

“So, marry her and run the bar with her, and when you want to get crooked you can do it wholesale. Let her make up your mind.”

“Vincent and his family want me to settle here and go to work,” Finnegan said, “but not in the bar business. They seem very anxious that everyone should go to work. I used to think that working was only a fad and would die out. Now many people take it seriously.

“Hugh wants me to be a salesman for him. Philip wants me to be a shop man for him and learn to be a mechanic. And Tim says that he has a spot for me in his ready-mix concrete business. Dotty says it’s probably modeling concrete overcoats. I don’t think that Tim loves me as well as the rest of them do.”

“Are you all right, Henry?” Mary Catherine asked. “Do you have any money, or how are these things handled?”

“Yes, I have enough money. We’re a bunch of money-making Frenchmen. And then, that’s good priest country. They raise a lot of them there, and are always ready to start them off.”

They drove to the city and went to the Stranahans. Everybody was too busy to bother with them except Maurine, Vincent’s youngest sister.

“You ran off from me this morning,” she challenged. “Let’s go for another ride.”

“You weren’t even up,” Finnegan said. “Come here. You give me a ride.”

“I will if you’re not too chicken to do it,” Maurine bantered. “And none of you looked in at my class party last night.”

“We’ll be back next year when you graduate,” Duffey said.

“Vincent is getting all the attention for getting married,” Maurine complained. “That’s a lot easier than getting out of the eleventh grade. Anybody can get married.”

“I know three girls who wouldn’t agree,” Mary Catherine said: she was hugging Finnegan.

“Oh, we don’t have to marry monks or pinkos or banana-noses,” Mary Virginia laughed. “We could all get married. Yes, the eleventh grade is much harder.”

"We're having a dance tomorrow," Maurine said, "and I want to swipe one of the boys to take me. It's quite the thing to have a grown man take you. Finnegan, will you do it?"

"Would they let me into a junior-year high-school dance?" Finnegan asked. And, however it happened, Finnegan was sitting on Mary Catherine's lap on the sofa.

"Mary Catherine, you've got my guy," Maurine said. "Sure they'll let you in, Finn. If sister says anything, I'll tell her that you're a junior from Sr. Philomena's and that you're retarded. And will you let me tell the other girls that we're engaged. Show Boat has a stage ring with a fake diamond as big as a wagon wheel that I can wear."

"Is this a Show Boat idea?" Finnegan asked.

"Yes, Show Boat is my idea girl. Finnegan, how awful! You haven't met Show Boat."

"I wish I were sure of that," Finnegan said uncertainly.

Maurine was fifteen and looked younger. She was chubby and freckled and pretty and lively. And she would get prettier and livelier.

"Come here, Finnegan," she said. "I told you I'd give you a ride if you weren't chicken."

Finnegan wasn't chicken. He mounted on her back and rode her around and around the room.

And Mary Catherine was smoldering about something. Why should she be? She was Casey's girl, and besides this was all in fun.

"Marry me, Finnegan," Maurine chattered. "I'll never be any younger."

"Wait five years," said Finnegan, "and I'll come back."

"Don't go away and you won't have to come back. And who else will give you such a classy ride."

"I will," said Mary Catherine Carruthers.

"I will," said Mary Virginia Schaeffer.

And both did, either at that time or some other time.

4.

His paunch was not at all. He also had the chest and arms and shoulders of a heavyweight wrestler. He was a friendly and quizzical face, and his eyebrows had each more hair than most men have on their heads.

He was a good lawyer, and had been a magistrate in better days and under better administrations. He could look right through a man. One of the men he looked right through was Finnegan, but Patrick didn't enjoy what he saw there.

"He is a schizo," Patrick said. "He lives several lives. He believes that he is an alien being in one of those lives, and it may be that he is. I'm not very sure about myself on that score. He is only a case-history in the notebook of some doctor, but who is that doctor? Our Faith

constrains us to deny that anyone is doomed; but it's a low twisted road that Finnegan has to follow and him done to death at the end of it. The only hope is that he has the talent to turn it into a happy death."

Patrick, of course, was fey. But he was never wrong.

Patrick lived in the Cat Castle with his family. It was an old and large three-story house and had had that name as long as anybody could remember. The big house had been given to Patrick by a crone whom he had served, the Cat Woman. She had not really had fifty cats; she had kept only eight or nine. Nor had she been too eccentric; just old and cranky. Patrick had been her lawyer and she had left him the house.

Stranahan was rich. He was Little-Irish Rich. He was lace-curtain and grand-piano Irish rich. This was nothing like being Big-German Rich or Old-French Rich. There were many kinds of rich in St. Louis. He really belonged to the poor rich.

The four sons of Patrick all resembled him in descending degree: Philip, Hugh, Timothy, and Vincent, starting with the six-foot-four of the father, each was an inch shorter, of a little lighter bone structure, and a little less hairy. Vincent was an even six feet, lighter than any of the others, and of more modest but still extraordinary pilosity. He had the same crooked smile and eyebrows that were the family trait. All those men always appeared to have just said or to be about to say something very humorous. They had a reputation of wits, partly deserved and partly assumed. And they were all good-humored.

This was a sporting family, all amateur boxers, all footballers. Vincent had intended to play ball in college, but it was not somehow agreed that he was not to go to college, but it was now somehow agreed that he was not to go to college. If it were Law, it could be learned in the Firm and in the Extensions. If it were to be Business, he could start with one of his brothers. If it were Engineering, he probably had not the aptitude anyhow. If he wanted to be a doctor, he should have been born in a doctor family. If he desired the arts, he should first acquire a little wealth elsewhere, and then indulge himself lightly and with discernment. Or he could go to work as a worker. There was nothing wrong with that. The main thing was to avoid the minor professions which were unworthy of an Irishman.

It was a family of hunters and fishermen. They had already made arrangements with Hans and Henry, God and circumstances permitting, for yearly forays after gulf marlin and Minnesota deer and Dakota pheasant. Chubby Maurine always referred to the male members of her family as the Rod and Gun Club, and the Club Room as the Fish Market.

"They're all fakes," she'd swear. "Some of those mounted fish aren't

big enough to use for bait. They won't take me fishing anymore because I show them up. After they flash all those purple flies at the fish, I come along and live-bait them to death. A fish is just like a human. He doesn't want to try anything new, especially if there's nothing to it but silk thread and bristles."

Maurine did live-bait them to death, and this was irritating in a home where the fly was king.

The Club Room had gun cases, and a simulated fireplace that was a sandbagged pistol range. Patrick would sit across the room from it many evenings and shoot from an easy chair. He had his own position and system for it, and was probably the best easy-chair pistol shot in town. For him this was the life. Some of the neighbors thought that anyone who shot guns in a house was an oddball: and some of the neighbors had less happy hopes than that of Patrick Stranahan.

His was a sociable clan and there was much company: clients and clubbers, friends and visiting relations, old boxers, K.C.s and cronies, Philip's poker-playing and Hugh's bridge-playing friends, Tim's acquaintances who were mostly literate, school friends of Vincent, and the many circles of Monica and the girls. It was a good family and a good house, and Patrick was satisfied with it.

And now Vincent was home again and was going to marry that odd little creature who was half Juliette and half urchin. Patrick had always referred to Show Boat simply as the Urchin.

He had known her father, Papa Piccone, for years; had represented the excitable little Italian in quarrels and litigations, and they had become friends. Patrick's imitations of Piccone, all hands and voice and motion, were much appreciated in the family. What he did not know was that Piccone's imitations of him had a much wider audience. As Hallohan J. O'Hoolihan he had, unbeknownst to himself, strode the comic boards of the Star and Garter in the person of Papa Piccone for many years and had become a stock character. Whenever Show Boat called him O'Hoolihan he grinned, but he got only half the joke.

Patrick and Papa, whose name was Gaetano, now spent many evenings in each other's company, drinking whisky at the Stranhans and vino at the Piccones, and discovering themselves to be pleasant and interesting antagonists for an endless stream of arguments. For they both could talk till the sun came up, and often they did.

5.

"She'd love it. And they probably will. Everybody in town knows her."

"Papa Piccone says he's going to play the accordion in the aisles during mass instead of having an organist. Father McGuigan says there's no liturgical objection."

"Oh mamma, they're kidding you! You'd better worry about the reception, not the wedding. Papa Piccone is going to roll in three barrels of wine and a bunch of jugs. He's damned if he's going to have them remember, two thousand years later, that he let them run out of wine like at Cana."

"I only hope our folks get along with the Italians. Can we trust Finnegan who is both? He's so charming and so outrageous at the same time. He sits on my lap and on Norma's. The way he carries on with that Mary Schaeffer is either a scandal or a circus. He rides on your back, young lady, and you tease him into doing it some more."

"Sure."

"Maurine, I don't even know whether you're supposed to be the bridesmaid. Show Boat is always fooling. I think you're supposed to be."

"She has a dress for a bridesmaid. She says, whoever the dress fits, let her wear it. I think that's an Italian proverb. I'll try it on."

6.

But it wasn't her smartness or kindness that shook Patrick Stranahan when he saw her first and made him wonder if old-animal-he had gotten enough from life to make up for missing her. And what was it that made Hans clench his hands at first meeting till they bled from four deep cuts in each palm? We may know, but we cannot name it. After all, Hans had Marie who was abiding sensation.

"There is a dimension in life that I hadn't known about," said Henry. The fat Frenchman said it softly and rubbed his chin.

And if, later, Dotty should say something prosaic, three words, a sentence, you must not imagine that it was the same thing or had the same effect as if an ordinary person had said it. There was a charge about Dotty.

Now, it wasn't that Finnegan didn't know this. It wasn't that he hadn't thought about it many a midnight. Dotty was always like a great poem to him, but why should she always be a poem of irretrievable loss? Why had he always assumed that he had lost her when she was always waiting for him? Why the ever sad recollection of what was still in the future? Why did he say 'Why couldn't it have been?' when it was still to be. No two can come together perfectly, of course. But people *do* come together all the time.

A crisis should have thunder and lightning in it. If Finnegan and Dotty had been able to generate a crisis with thunder and lightning, things might have been different. But what if the last anchor-cable parts when no one knows it, and the drift has already begun? This is the crisis come and gone. It may be that a little kadge-anchor still held Finnegan, but if so it was dragging rapidly. The main anchor-lines had all been cut. For others, this business of finding a niche was easy. For

Finnegan it was impossible.

On Wednesday they talked for an hour or more. And after that the door was still open between them, not wide open, but open. And when, the same day, Finnegan talked to Another, the opening narrowed to a crack. But the door was never closed all the way. The key was never turned in it. But, for all that, it had ended. Though Dotty hadn't admitted it, she was quietly desolate.

But what was the nature and name of this impediment that ran across so many of the lives of Finnegan. The name of the impediment that ran across at least several of the lives was Teresa.

7.

"Is it wrong to ask why it couldn't have been you and I, John?" Teresa questioned in the first words that passed between them. "I am not mistaken about this. We surely aren't two who would dream up a drama. If I had met you first, there wouldn't have been a problem. How is it that I know you so well? Wouldn't I have been the one?"

"You are the one, Teresa. Now there will never be another."

"I can't have you both. I will be happy, I know, with Vincent. A *chiodo* in the heart, it never killed. Mary was in this morning. I told her that she just has to be part Italian. It may be, she said. She was from a mixed-blood province, and one of her great-grandfathers did come from over the sea, she said. She says the history books are wrong. They *did* have coffee when she was a girl. She drinks it black. Are we being Italian about this?"

"*Scurament*, how else would we be? And besides, you will give me an excuse. Now, when I look in the bottom of a glass, I can say 'Teresa is the reason.' Before, I could only say 'Why do I do this thing?'"

"I used to think about her (you) and know exactly what she would look like. I am clairvoyant: I even saw the house and the block that we would live in. And I could journey to that town now, and to the block and the house, though it is a section I have never been in.

"I thought, when I first heard of you, that you might be the one, and I hoped you were not, for you were the girl of my best friend. I was uneasy; for if you were the one, then it was only if he died that I could have you.

"But when I saw your picture I was relieved. It was not you; you were just another dago kid. Later I saw another picture and I was frightened all over again. It was just possible that you could be. Your pictures are not quite like you; you are much prettier in your pictures.

"But when I finally saw you just now, there was no doubt; and it seems there is no more hope in anything for me. Even your hands are as I knew they would be, your fingers pointed, and all put together in the damnest way, like a bunch of wires. I used to dream about your twisting fingers."

"Oh, I worked the puppets a lot with them. And the concertina spreads them, and tricks too. Did you know I do tricks, besides being clairvoyant also? *Margie la Maga*—the magician I am."

La Maga—*La Strega*—you are a witch. Do you know that you can tell a witch by the corners of her eyes and by the lay of her hair. It's in one of Hans' old books, and you're a witch on all counts. And there are cabalistic marks on the moons of the fingernails—"

"Not on mine."

"—that appear only on Fridays."

"I'll wear gloves."

"When you were baptized, the salt flamed when it touched you. It does that when it touches real brimstone. And the font cracked."

"It could have been any of a dozen witches who cracked that font. Don't get crocked before supper, John. Oh well, give me one too and we'll be sad together. God bless this wine!"

"It is good, Teresa. We needn't have talked of this at all; but if we hadn't, someday I might have thought it was only a dream, how things might have been."

"Oh no, it's no dream. We'd both have known. I'll love you till the stars grow cold. Then, in a better place, we'll all be together and these things are resolved there. It isn't as though we weren't sure of that. John, did you hear me?"

"I heard you, Teresa."

"You won't let a few glasses get you lost, will you, John?"

"No. I'll be there. I may have to use trickery but I'll be there. It won't be too long before those stars grow cold. Some nights they seem pretty chilly."

"Come see us all the time. And if I'm ever a widow, we'll fix that."

"*Dio!* Don't say it. Maybe I would hope it."

8.

"A little Latin and a little Law is enough," said Patrick. "Any further scholarship is vanity. Livy gives enough of Latin; and enough of History, with Cobbett of course. There are those who read Belloc, but he has too much French in him and they are not to be trusted to write history."

"Augustine should be read, but only once, and that in youth. It is good to have read several books in youth as this gives a man background. The danger is in continuing the reading habit into manhood as it is time-consuming. Novels should be left to the old Russians who were supreme. But to read them takes away days of a limited life. The novel that man lives himself should be enough."

"What music a man needs, let him make. He should fiddle a little for his own edification once or twice a year; that is often enough. If he cannot even play the fiddle, then what has he to do with music

anyhow?

"If one has to have pictures, there are Watteau and Dürer and Hogarth. I cannot think of any others. One minor original and a dozen fine copies are all that an honest man will ever be able to afford. Since the Georgics, there has been no real poetry.

"Once in five years is enough for the theater. It is more of a hope than a promise. For four hundred years we have gone to the theater in the hope of a worthy play, and it has not appeared; and this without even an authoritative promise that it will come, as we have for the larger things like redemption and salvation. And yet can no person watch a curtain rise without the hope of great things. There is no art from which so much is expected after so many disappointments.

"As for travel, once in his lifetime, for the saving of his soul, a man should go, not to Mecca, but to Dublin and London, to Paris and Rome. There is no need to go further; these are all that are required of a Christian man.

"We should know the gracious cities of our own land, San Antonio, San Francisco, New Orleans, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and the Capital (as it were) New York. If a man would be perfect he must select one of these for his home.

"The horse we have already lost in America, but we still have the rod and the gun of the good things the Lord made. One whisky is enough, and four brews, an American, a Danish, a Bohemian, and of course Guinness. One red wine and one white wine, one brandy, one rum. Seafood and wife should be chosen early in life. If a man's philosophy cannot be written on one sheet of paper there is still fat to be fried out of it.

"In the Church, the age of giants has just closed, and the age of pygmies comes. The illumination is occluded: we come to the common, which is Hell. The secular-liberal uncleanness is upon us, a sick parasite devouring entrails in the holy places. Ah, you've always been one of them, Father. Did you ever consider becoming a Catholic in fact?"

"You go too far, Patrick," Father McGuigan protested angrily. "There is no difference between you Pharisees of the Right and the Sadducees of the Left."

"They are not so ranged, but the difference endures," Patrick insisted. "The Sadducees did not believe in the Resurrection, nor do their modern counterparts, you. It is you in your dullness who are the alien things, even though you have won the world. *We* are the world, however much such norm be reduced.

"But how are we of the old line run out of giants? I am Patrick (the Roman, not the Irish one) and my wife is the first Monica returned. But if I have sired an Augustine, I cannot see him in any of my sons."

"But Patrick, from the poets you left out Dante," Papa Piccone howled his way in.

"A rimester, Papa, a rimester," Patrick said.

"Petrarcho."

"A sonnet writer. Young boys and even women have written sonnets."

"You have forgotten Buonorroti, Sancho, Cellini."

"Stone-cutters, bronze-casters, scratchers, egg-white mixers. They were good, but they should have remained anonymous like their betters in the real Middle Ages. We clutter our minds with them. For myself, if I am given final grace, then I will have everything that counts."

The four of them talked that night of several things.

The next day, Patrick talked to Finnegan.

"There is a seaman and riverman named Doppio di Pinne," he said. "I defended him for homicide recently. He is the same man that you are, but how can that be?"

"I don't know," said Finnegan. "I don't know him. I have heard of him, though: that he and I resemble."

"No, you don't particularly resemble, but you are the same man," Patrick said. "But I defended him in St. Louis while you were in service with my son around the world."

9.

"You catch the train, Vince. I'll stay and marry Show Boat."

"Would you, Finn? That'd solve everything. Wait a minute! It'd kill me if anyone else married her. I'm in love with her. I thought you were my friend."

"You never know, Vincent, you just never know."

"I have three thousand dollars besides my mustering-out. We could go a long way. We could sail to places like Venice and Prague."

"The sea-coast of Bohemia, it always attracted me too."

"I love her but I'm afraid of her. When she looks at me sometimes I don't know what she means. She's a ghost. I mean it literally. She's just like you are sometimes. Let's go to Frisco. Let's go back to Australia for some good beer."

"When I go I'll drink for you also, Vincent. You stay and marry Teresa."

"I wonder if I'd go to Hell if I killed myself. I have a pistol. It'd only take a minute. You could tell people I was irrational."

"I couldn't tell the Lord that, Vincent. He'd say 'Finnegan, you know better than that. You know he was just scared.'"

"If it wasn't for that I'd do it. Why don't you get married?"

"I can't, Vincent. You saw her first. She's your girl."

"God! I don't mean Teresa I mean your girl, Dotty. Why don't you

marry her. She's wonderful."

"I don't know. She is, isn't she? I tell you, Vincent, we're all of us wonderful. Who ever saw such a bunch of wonderful people?"

"Don't you want to marry her?"

"My God, Vince, if I only knew what I wanted!"

"I wish it was about a week from now. I bet I'd have a lot of fun then. I wonder why I love Teresa. She isn't beautiful."

"Allettamente, incantevole, ricciuta."

"Yea, all kinds of things like that. Say, we could go down to Mexico."

"You and Teresa?"

"No. You and me, it'd be funny if I really did stay and marry her."

But it wasn't so much Vincent who was scared of the marriage. It was Finnegan. One by one the props had collapsed around him and he would soon have to stand alone in the world. This he had always before avoided by trickery. Now he was running out of tricks.

10.

"Fili tui sicut novellae olivarum in circuitu mensae tuae."

Vincent found the words of the Gradual comical and pointed them out to Show Boat—"Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine on the sides of thy house—Thy children as olive plants about thy table." She seemed to appreciate the phrase about the little olive-knockers.

Vincent was surprised when Father McGuigan said 'Wilt thou take Teresa here present?' He had almost expected 'Wilt thou take Show Boat here present.' Father had never called her anything else.

Vincent heard mass with rare good humor. It should be heard with joy. Joy is everywhere mentioned. Long ago he had noticed that Teresa always smiled at prayer or when coming from communion.

There was the wedding. And the reception. People will not be saying two thousand years from now that Papa Piccone let them run out of wine.

"It is the amateur drunks who blossom at receptions," Finnegan said, "and I become an amateur myself for the occasion, doing it for the sheer love of it."

Finnegan always had a lot of fun when there was plenty of wine and whisky and accordion music. He sat on the bride's lap, on the bride's mother's lap, and on mama Monica's. But do not believe all the other stories they tell about him at that reception.

It's true that when Mary Catherine Carruthers got the hiccups, Finnegan told her to lie down on the floor: and he stood on her stomach. This cured her hiccups but it gave her giggles. And it's true that he romped a bit on Mary Schaeffer and Dotty and Marie and Maurine, but they were all quite good friends of his.

And a little after noon, after the wedding couple had left in

Teresa's old car, and after the Irish and Italians had really begun to warm up to each other at the reception, Finnegan, Henry, Duffey, Dotty, and Mary Schaeffer all got in Mary's Ford to drive down to New Orleans.

In New Orleans on a Sunday evening they all checked into the Jung Hotel.

And Saturday morning, Finnegan woke about five o'clock, for the light was on and he thought he had turned it off when he went to bed. And the typewriter was clicking, and he was sure that he had stopped typing when he retired.

This one is about Henry, so what are all these other people doing in it? Well, Henry was a solitary, but he could only be happy when people were around. Besides, you know Henry from the people he influenced. You can't know him of himself.

Henry collected, transferred, and handled a lot of money that week. He went around the state and saw a bishop and an archbishop. One obstacle could not be removed. He would have to go at least one year to minor seminary before entering the seminary in New Orleans. His father Lawrence was surprised at his haste.

Henry was shocked that Finnegan had left. Had he been there, Finnegan would not have left, for Henry had much the stronger will. Still, if Finn was destined to skip, he would have skipped sometime.

The *Bark* had drawn first blood, and by its very launching. A bright bitter trickle of deep red flowed from the *Crock* in Chicago, and in the

unmistakable hand of Casey. The conflict was more important than it would seem. The *Crock* had shot at the same twenty-five thousand people whom the *Bark* now shot at, that group of minds not so very superior but to situated as to control the thought of the country.

In those days Stein had begun to call himself a neo-Jew. "I might be the only one," he'd say. "If there were others, we could form a group. It would be the most important group in the world. It would be the only group of any importance."

The Pelican did not thrive. It was a boney bird with an empty beak. It could go for a long time on a few fish-heads. The *Bark* shipped more water but it did not go down.

OF X, ANOTHER TOUCH OF REALITY IN A TOKEN WORLD.

Several years went by. Dotty put her foot down.

Finnegan nearly always got to town once a year. Dotty appreciated this and knew that it was hard for him to do so. Ulysses can only with the greatest effort keep yearly appointments. He always looked as though he had traveled hard and rough to get there, and yet he appeared well when he was clean and rested.

Dotty wrote a friendly letter to Marie in St. Louis:

Chapter Five

Henry the Barque

1.

"What is more apt?" asked Dotty. "If we are not all Jungian Archetypes, then I just don't know what we are."

Then Finnegan and Dotty went down to the Quarter to look up old friends. They caroused a bit, they talked a bit, they went to various places. They evaded the foamier and noisier shoals (Finnegan hated that New Orleans jazz). They went to where Dotty used to work, and they found old friends of both of them. Some were eerie. Finnegan was a high-minded boy with remarkably low friends.

"It's as though the party's over," Finnegan said. He didn't know what he'd expected.

"Finn, dear, the party is perpetual, or it is nothing. We must make every moment of our lives a party."

"I don't know how." They were in shortly after midnight.

And Monday morning, Mary Schaeffer and Henry drove to Morgan City. Henry said he'd be back within a week. Meanwhile, they were to find a place and write him the address.

"Did you know that St. Jude was the patron of printers and little magazines?" Dotty said. "He was the only Apostle who was a printer."

"Same thing. Now we must steal a print shop and get started."

"We aren't going to work yet, are we, Dotty?"

"We sure are, Finn dear. They couldn't do it without us. I was raised in a print shop. They will need me. They is Duffey. And you, If you will go in with us, lover. And Henry, of course, who holds patent on the idea but can't be in on it too directly. Maybe Mary Schaeffer. And Mrs. Duffey when she comes down from Chicago. And one more which will blow your top when you hear so I will not tell you now."

"What will you need?"

"Thirty thousand dollars. We'll spend that so fast that we never will know what happened to it. How much do you have, Finnegan?"

"Four hundred dollars."

"Give me three hundred of it right now."

"I don't want to."

"I know you don't, Honey. But I have to have it, right now. If it was for anybody but myself I wouldn't ask for it. Thank you, dear. Now go get a job and go to work. I'll meet you tonight or leave you a note."

This was Monday morning. Finnegan went to work on the docks and pulled a nine hour shift. Back at the café that night Dotty had left a note for him with an address. He went there. It was a cluttered shop-like building. Dotty was standing in the doorway. They had taken over an old print shop and set up cots and a cook stove in the back for

living quarters. Finnegan found that all his things had been moved there. There was work to do and money to raise. Finnegan couldn't see it.

"Roma no era edificate n'un giorno," he said.

"It was *too* built in one day," Dotty contradicted. "It's the only town that was; I don't know why they got the proverb backwards. Two brothers built it in one day. There's more than that many of us."

Dotty went away then and left Finnegan with a list of things to do. He had worked nine hours and he didn't want to do them. Later he thought that, had it not been for the list, things might have been different. Later he was always thinking that, had it not been for this or that, things would have been different.

At this time he was still engaged to Dotty. As a matter of fact he was engaged to her till the day he died. And he loved her. This is not an empty phrase. So he went to work and worked all night with Duffey in the print shop.

Just what was Duffey doing there anyhow? No one thought to ask. It might have been supposed that he had come to St. Louis as friend of Casey (though it happened that they were enemies by then), or as a friend of Casey's girl Mary Catherine Carruthers (though her own reasons for being there were very tenuous). Actually he had come to St. Louis to meet Henry who had written to him, and he had come to New Orleans now to put Henry's ideas into effect. And Stein had been in St. Louis to see Henry.

"Duff, is there a moral defect in a person who doesn't like jazz?" Finnegan asked.

"There is, Finnegan, but it need not be mortal. Salvation is possible for one who is not a devotee, else what of the generations of good people who lived and died before jazz was born? There must have been a limbo for them before the blast of the soprano saxophone announced a new Heaven and a new Earth.

"Of those since that time who have rejected it, there may also be hope. If they were born physically without ears they can be saved. If they were born with ears indeed but stone deaf, they may still be saved. Otherwise no. You don't like jazz, Finnegan?"

"No. I've never told anyone. I've been afraid. The tyranny of conformity is too great. I was born in the same block where jazz was born. I'm of the generation that never heard anything else. But I don't like it."

"It looks dark for you, boy. There are traitors in Heaven. There are sycophants and socialists there. Actually we do not know that there are no Drys in Heaven; there is such a thing as deathbed repentance. Even Dives could have been saved had he asked Lazarus for a cool Mint Julep or a Tom Collins instead of water. That was the test and he

failed. That is the meaning of the parable. But perhaps all do not fail. In your terrible negligence you may be given a final chance.

"When you're in your coffin and the sequence reaches '*Tuba mirum spargan sonam*', all you have to do is rise up and say 'Yes, dad, blow that horn!' But it's better not to take chances or wait till you're already dead.

"Are you sure you're on sound ground though, Finn. Is your own position irreproachable? You haven't a tin ear?"

"No, no. That isn't it at all."

"You will have to tolerate jazz. We are going to job print a jazz magazine."

"You and Dotty might. I am not going to print a jazz magazine."

"We need you for the illustrations. And to proofread music."

"I might draw them but they'll have a bit to them. And cacophony doesn't need proofreading. How many magazines are there? I don't think you people know what you're doing."

"We'll have to do a lot of printing to come out. The jazz paper will be on Friday. The *Seamen's* paper comes out on Monday. We bring out the *Union* sheet on Tuesday and the *Sporting News* on Wednesday. That's all we have lined up yet."

"When is your crusading magazine?"

"That is our work of love. What we make on the rest of them we will lose on that; and after our working day, we will work on it. It will cost a lot. We figure there are twenty-five thousand people we have to get it to, and not twenty-five of the twenty-five thousand would subscribe to it."

"Are there that many people who have to do with molding opinions?"

"Yes. About twenty-five thousand out of the hundred and sixty million in the country. Our list is pretty close. We won't miss a thousand of those who have any effect."

"And how many of those will you be able to have effect on?"

"Quite a few. Those whose business it is to mold opinion are themselves easily molded. Really there are only a few primary influences. We intend to be one of them."

"Who's idea is all this?"

"The merry monk Henry. Then Dotty. Then me. And then another. You must stay with us. It can be as interesting as bar-crawling for a career, and more worthy of you. You have a talent for rapid illustration in all mediums, and we would like to have your services free."

The week went fast. Mrs. Duffey phoned from Chicago that she had sold the house and furniture and everything else they had. She was coming with the car, one suitcase, and eighteen hundred books of

Duffey's. Duffey was throwing in all he had.

Henry would be back Saturday. And Dotty was the boss, for she knew more about printing than even Duffey did.

"Papa knew all there was to know about printing," she said. "He went broke on thirteen different magazines. We had to skip out of that many towns when I was a kid. Lots of times we didn't have anything to eat. Papa knew all there was to know about the business."

"He must have learned from his mistakes," Duffey said.

"Mistakes? He never made any mistakes. He played every deal just right."

"Was he unlucky then?"

"No, he was pretty lucky. A lot more than most. Mama didn't die till we were half-grown. She never knew how hard we had it later. Mama used to worry about money and things like that."

"Why didn't your father get out of the business if you all had it so hard?"

"Get out of it? How could he get out of it? That's the way he made his living."

Friday morning a letter came. It had a large bill in it, as much as a working man made in three months. And it had a verse.

Scratch a Turk,
And find a Jew.
I don't think it'll work,
Do You?

—S

2.

An owl-faced large young man with horn-rim glasses and a cigar was typing. And on the desk in front of him was a placard 'Absalom Stein, Publisher.' He grinned at Finnegan. "Giovanni, your troubles are over," he said.

"I never had any," Finnegan said, still not believing what he saw.

"Absalom has been persuaded to take charge," Absalom said. "A touch of genius is all this thing needed. Luckily I thought of myself."

"You may be, Stein, I'm not sure. But if you're in, I'm out."

Actually Finnegan was scared. He was scared cold. It wasn't Stein he was scared of. For a long time now he'd had to force himself not to like Stein. He was scared because he realized that he didn't belong with this. He still didn't belong anywhere.

Vincent knew what he would do. Hans had always known. Henry knew now, Casey still did not know; but there would come a time when he would. But would there ever come such a time for Finnegan?

In later times Finnegan said that if Stein had not joined, things might have been different. But Finnegan said this about many things besides Stein. Likely things would never have been different with Finnegan.

He set the coffee on and started to pack his things.

Stein understood Finn better than Finn understood him. If anything could have been done for Finn, Stein would have done it. He belonged to the club of those who would have helped Finn if only—

“Where are you going, Giovanni?” he asked. “I do not want to drive you out.”

“I am going to Chicago to see Casey and ask him nine or ten questions. I didn't know the questions to ask him last week. If these do not resolve thing, I will begin my Odyssey till I find the answer. I do not believe that you are the answer.”

“No. I surely am not. But you won't find the answers by wandering. There aren't any answers in the way you mean. Someday you will have to withdraw the questions.”

Duffey got up and seemed to have been expecting Stein. They were at once talking of setting up a board of directors.

“Will you be one, Finnegan?” Duffey asked him.

“Who will they be?”

“Henry. Me. Dotty. Stein. Hans. Gabrielovitch (you don't know him). And you. Seven.”

“I will be one only to keep further incompetents off the list. What do we call our little sister magazine?”

“Dotty wants to call it the *Pelican*. The Pelican has liturgical significance. It was believed to feed its young with its own blood and is thus symbolic of the blood of Christ. It is also the symbol of our adopted State of Louisiana. Stein wants to call it the *Neo-Centrist Review of Evolvate Socio-Geopolitical Motifs in a Disintegrating World*, to be subtitled *Thesis and Antithesis*. Several of us think that this title is too long. I lean to the *Pig-Sticker*, which is direct and all-inclusive of our aims. Henry wants to call it the *Bark*, in the meaning of a little boat, from a dream he had which started him on all this.”

“Then it will be the *Bark*. Two is a plurality when nobody can agree. I will draw the masthead before I leave.”

Finnegan drew the *Bark* in charcoal, the wave-rocked, water-shipping boat with the shattered masts, the boat about to go down in terrible disaster; he drew it just as Henry had dreamed it. For Finnegan was Clairvoyant, and knew what Henry had dreamed from the first. And under the drawing he listed:

The Seven Pillars of Righteousness:

Henry—The Merry Monk.

Duffey—Thou art Forever.

Stein—Absalom to Omega. Oh, the big O.

Dotty—The Beautiful Barmaid.

Hans—Aquinas in a T-Shirt.

Gabrielovitch—Don't Know It in Croat.

Giovanni—*In Absentia, O Absentia!*

He drew them all wonderfully and truly, including himself, and Gabrielovitch whom he had never seen. It is the same masthead that the *Bark* uses today.

"I go now," Finnegan said. "This isn't a real world. It's a thin crust, and it crumbles. I know another world or two that are realer than this."

"Oh, we know it isn't real, Finn," Dotty said sadly. "But He told us to remain here until He comes. He may be angry with you when He finds that you have not waited in the world that He assigned to you."

She cried when he was gone.

3.

Henry Francis Salvatore was born on December 8, 1920 in Morgan City, Louisiana. His father was Lawrence Salvatore and his mother was Mary Genevieve Herbert. His brothers were Christopher, Eustace, Hilaire, Joseph, Louis, Mark, and Simeon; his sisters Angela, Lucy, and Rita. This was not a large family by regional standards, but neither was it small enough to be ashamed of. With a group of near-living cousins it made a respectable showing.

The closest of the uncles were Alphonse, Charles, Fulgence, George, and Matthew Salvatore; and Anthony, Edward, Gregory, Julien and Nicole Hebert. Of aunts in the neighborhood there were only Emily and Marietta.

This made in all, with the family of Lawrence, thirteen families of cousins. Their march was a complex of rivers, bays, and marshes, a world of water, fresh, brackish and salt, and of water-logged land.

Henry was the fat one and the mean one. His cousins followed him in everything, Basil and Sebastian, Fabian and Adrian who were older, and Peter who was younger than he. Henry ruled in town and country, but in school he had trouble. It wasn't that he was dumb. They had a lot of dumb boys there, but Henry wasn't. It was that he was too bull-headed smart. He maintained the point that after you have learned a thing there is no sense harping on it. In French or English or Latin he never met a word or sentence that gave him pause, but he saw no reason to sit in school and copy out squibs from one tongue into another.

"When you've extracted one square root you've extracted them all," he said, "and a quadratic equation solved once is solved forever."

Papa Lawrence became tired of quibbling with the authorities over the boy. Accordingly, he sat Henry down one evening and carefully examined him. He discovered that Henry was already educated. This surprised him, for he had considered Henry the dullest of his boys.

From that day, early in his thirteenth year, Henry had perfect freedom. He waxed fat, and traveled. But his character was not formed then; it was formed before he was born. He was a Cajun; think

about that a while and you will get the picture.

The Cajuns are not recognized as a separate entity by the anthropologists. They are put into a sub-class of sub-class instead of being treated as a people apart. They are Caucasian, and then they are Alpine or possibly Mediterranean. They have either long heads or round heads, and their blood has 'O' or 'A' types. In point of fact, many of them have tidewater instead of blood, and no heads at all. There is a pretended history of them, and a claim that their language is somehow related to French because it uses the same words. But the carefully arrived-at facts are that they were talking Cajun, driving buggies, raising rice, going to Mass, trapping muskrats, drinking inferior wine and impossible beer, and generally lousing around in the whole country South of the Red River before Rome was even built.

It is bad luck to speak lightly of them though. You had *better* like them, or stay out of their country. Those boys will whip you as quick as they will bait a hook. And Henry was mean, even for a Cajun.

He would spend weeks on Baratarria Bay muskrat trapping. He grew larger, and he seemed much older than he was. He was a bar-room brawler when he was fifteen. He went with the shrimp-boats, he went up and down the Mississippi with barge trains. He signed out from New Orleans and Port Arthur and Galveston on cotton boats and cattle boats and tankers and sulphur boats. He became a rake, and dabbled in vices from Copenhagen to Aruba. His fat was an illusion. He was strong as a cape buffalo, and had never been whipped. The Fat Frenchman was known as a mean and ugly customer.

It was said that he was black-balled in the entire merchant marine. Men from half-a-dozen crews had told him that they'd kill him if he ever smelled salt water again. There had been some trouble, and seamen were a clannish bunch. Henry was stubborn, but he wasn't that stubborn. They made him see the light in this.

He left the sea and drove trucks for several years. Among others, he drove for the Red Dog Motor Freight Line which was owned by the Schaeffer; it was at this time that he met Mary Virginia Schaeffer. This girl he would have married, had it not been for an odd dream that he had overseas.

Henry had joined the army on his twenty-first birthday. He was a member of the High Order of the Dirty Five. Now he was out again and had affairs to settle.

4.

"Is it really such a rush, Henry? Are you trying to do this too fast?"

"Yet. I try to do it too fast. The Church may go down."

"In Mohammed's time, it was thought the world would be lost."

"Half was lost."

"And at the time of the Great Schism?"

“Half was lost then.”

“And at the Reformation?”

“Half again lost.”

“So many halves? At the Revolution, it was thought France would be lost.”

“France was lost.”

“Do you know to whom the next half will be lost, Henry?”

“Yes, to those of the Secular-Liberal Religion, working from inside the Church, but with no Catholic element in their make-up. Within twenty years, one-half the priests, nine-tenths of the priest editors, and one-quarter of the laity of America will be advocates of this dirtiest thing ever to rise against the Church. To the number of one priest I will counteract it.”

“I wasn't sure you understood. But what do you offer? A cure for poverty?”

“It isn't necessary that the pure be deprived of their poverty. It is only necessary that the Gospel be preached to them. But there will come mouths that are unable even to speak the name ‘Holy Poverty’.”

“Why comes this to you, my oddest son. But you cannot bring back the thirteenth century, only the sixteenth. You will have to take one road or the other, and what if both roads are wrong?”

“We do not have to take any road. We are there. We are the Centrists. We stand in the middle and build the world around us.”

“The world is a very thin bubble, Henry. It is only a slight detail in the dream. Do not lose the wonder, or ever regard the world as a main thing. And I believe that you place too much emphasis on the Communist thing. It is only one of the many shells that the old Antagonist manipulates the pea under. You do not even know whether it is the shell that the pea is under now. It may be a diversion.”

“There are a hundred holes in the boat and the ocean is coming in through all of them,” Henry said. “But it is presently one of the most gaping holes.”

“How will you get all these folks to work for you while you are still learning your trade?”

“They will do it. God gave us each other.”

“One thing bothers me. You never rebuilt the world, before, Henry. It may be that you do not know how.”

“It may be that I do not.”

But Henry was not too busy to go fishing one day that week, as it had been four years since he had fished in his own land.

5.

Duffey and Dotty and Stein had now set Henry into immediate action. They took an immense warehouse and loft next to the print shop. Here were the beginnings of the library and institute and

auditorium. Here too were all the living quarters, including the flop-house of Duffey's insistence.

Gabby (Gabrielovitch) who soon joined them was still a young man and did not adopt the Spartan life of the rest. He liked to have quite a bit of money. As the *Bark* did not pay, he did much money work elsewhere. He made the bars from three in the morning till dawn and was known for his capacity. His companions on these jaunts were Berny Cacciatore of the *Sporting News Sheet*, and Bulo Belonki of the *Jazz Sheet*. Much of the work on those two papers was done then. It was Berny who told them that Finnegan had fought in the ring under his own name of Solli before the war, and that he was good. Even Dotty hadn't known that.

The rest of them went out on the town only about once a month, Dotty, and Henry when he was there, Duffey and Mrs. Duffey, Mary Schaeffer when she was there; and Stein. They cared more for the company of the vinters than for the stuff they sold.

This Gabby was, like Finnegan, of the People of the Nose. His was of the trans-Adriatic variety, craggy as the mountains of that east coast, and contoured as the crosier of a Montenegrin shepherd. Gabby had clipped a paragraph to the effect that persons with big noses were passionate and he tacked it on the bulletin board under the heading 'Noted with Interest'.

And Stein was interested in noses. "The appearance of the nose in the goyim is a hopeful tendency," he said. "A weak and deceitful generation cannot grow noble noses. The Archangels had noble noses. The conventional iconography goes back only to Michaelangelo whose own nose was flattened in youth and who de-emphasized the nose. But in the beginning it was not so."

Stein would have liked a more imposing nose for himself, but taking thought did not add one thumb's length to it. "There is only one thing to do," Dotty told him. "Leave your nose alone and shrink the rest of your head. It would help."

It was Gabby though who strangely added a philological sidelight to their own legend.

"The Argosy is really the Ragosy," he said. "It was a fleet out of Ragusa in Illyria, and Ragusa was the original city of Iolcus."

"Rosemary Riorden implied the same thing," said Stein, "that we sailed from Illyria."

"You could not have known that," said Mr. X (you don't know him yet) with a touch of anger. "You were not *that* sergeant. You were not there. You could never have heard the name of this Rosemary."

"Could I not? Then how have I spoken it?" Stein asked stubbornly. "To some extent I *was* that sergeant. Do not tell me what I am not. We were all of that old company, even myself, and you, and Duffey, and

many others besides the Five. And we all partake of each other. But amnesia seals it off."

6.

This piece has to be given at length, for Casey always wrote at length. It is an authentic example of the style of Casey, and you cannot know him without it. And it is in the manner of the peculiar people who now possessed him:

'From Pelican Land and off the Pelican Press comes a new magazine which is certainly a beak-full. It is also a belly-full. This is a bird we never loved. Now we know why.

'The *Bark*, or Barque (they use both spellings), erroneously depicted on the Mast-Head as a square rigged ship (it should be composite rigged) will hardly survive the first squall. It is not Seaworthy.

'Of the background of the co-captains (who are all Chiefs and no Indians) we happen to know more than can be decently printed. Though calling itself a neo-Centrist (does that hyphenate have any meaning?) Catholic Publication of the anti-Communist (has that?) persuasion, it does not have ecclesiastical sanction. Henry the Merry Monk is neither merry nor a monk. Though I love him like a brother, I must report that he is a dour fat Frenchman of no experience. He has now been made the tool of an unsavory band of opportunists who have caused him to mortgage the family farms to promote this dubious venture.

'Hans, the Aquinas in a T-shirt, was wearing a dinner jacket and a highball the last time I saw him. Though listed as an editor, he is actually in the contracting business in St. Louis: and it is reported that he has put some of his own money and more of other peoples' (unbeknownst to them) into the project. In charity it is hoped that he does not know what direction it is taking.

'The third of my misguided brothers, Solli (Finnegan), is also on the Mast Head. But he is not in New Orleans. He is here in Chicago at the moment, and a moment is as long as he stays in any one place. He deserted before the first shot. There is a proverb that even buzzards sometimes gag.

'Number four of the secret seven is Dotty the Beautiful Barmaid. We know and love Dotty, and she is beautiful. But her talents as barmaid are not truly cosmopolitan, and extend only from the Absinthe Frappé to the Sazerac, a distance of not more than four blocks. Beyond that, it is said that she does not know a Bloody Mary from a Screwdriver. Her talents as a journalist are still more limited. She is guilty of dropping her life's savings in this and we are sorry.

'Now let us take the gloves off. The other three are not nice. They are among the most disreputable figures ever to disgrace American

journalism. Stein, under the name Hugo Stone, is a card-carrying Communist. The effrontery of this Communist Jew as an editor of a Catholic publication, even a 'neo-Centrist' one! No, I am not an anti-Semite, but Stein is. Did you know that there are Jews who are anti-Semite?

'Gabrielovitch is a poisoner of the Fascist persuasion. He is an apologist for the traitor Draja Mihailovitch, one of the most evil men of our lifetime, a representative of all that is unprogressive in his sad country. Gabby has flooded the Slavic language press with comment favorable to this deadly enemy, and has repeatedly made attacks on our noble ally Tito, as well as on our major Slavic ally. He is against the rational Polish-Russian settlement and has supported the London Polish government (possibly the most evil group of men in the world); he has even challenged by implication the judgment of our own Great Dead President in this affair, an effrontery that staggers. He has favored a return to power of the pre-war Central European governments, and has grudging support to groups of a futuristic and progressive pattern. He has opposed the Pan-Slavic concept that should bring pride to every Slav of the world (I am one), and has rejected the natural leadership of the Soviet Union over the Slavs beyond the Homeland, and the need of its directive guidance in these other lands. First we have an anti-Semite Jew. Then we have an anti-Slavic Slav.

'Last and not least, in all things and by every count, we have Duffey. Duffey, the pig-sticker. The question is who is the pig and who is the pig-sticker. I maintain that Duffey is the pig and I will prove this thesis. Duffey was at one time connected with the *Crock*. The *Crock* will endeavor to undo what it can of his harm. To unsay a lie is hard, and proverbially it is difficult to unscramble an egg. But this is nothing to un-Duffeying a Duffey. We will go into the pig-sticking business ourselves, and Duffey is our pig.

'The magazine has many axes. It is straight China Lobby. It supports the discredited Chiang (possibly the most evil man alive in the world) and sees virtue in his refusal to cooperate with the futuristic elements in his country; and it insists on a play of words which would identify these forward elements with a doctrinaire Western Communism.

'In its European view it still at this late date supports the clerical-reactionary elements in Poland, Hungary, and the Balkans. It goes so far as to call for unguided (code word 'free') elections in Eastern European regions, where guidance under correctly oriented leadership will be required for at least twenty years. The *Bark* is so naïve about this that we wonder if it is serious.

'On the domestic scene, it is 'Constitutionalist', placing undue

value on a document of solid but necessarily transitory worth and centered in a period that is largely past. We likewise think highly of the Constitution; some elements of it may be carried over into future constitutions. It is the noble ancestor of a long line of revisionist and evolute documents which will guide us to an integrated world.

‘Literally it is worthless, containing some New Orleans sketches of the type that Lafcadio Hearn did better in the last century; some pretentious effluvia in the manner of Duffey; one funny story apparently written by Finnegan before he left there, and a lame review section.

‘For the rest, let us warn the innocent of the *Bark*. It is poison. It must be exterminated.’

That was the end of the editorial. It didn't affect them much at the Pelican Press. Duffey, who had been closer to Casey than Casey's father, seemed to shrug him off easily. Gabrielovitch who did not know him personally knew only that he did not know what he was talking about in Slavic matters. What Henry thought he didn't say.

The only one who was really stirred by it was Dotty; and she was furious.

“Now know a Bloody Mary from a Screwdriver!” The dishonesty of this attack wounded her. Dotty had been to bartenders' school and she knew more about mixing drinks than all the Caseys of this world will ever know.

7.

“I have some experience in being a Party of One,” Duffey said. “But, Absalom, to be a neo-Jew, isn't that just to be a Christian?”

“Not at all. With a head the size of yours you should have more understanding. Were you also in the desert and in Egypt? Did you follow the Pillar and the Cloud? Were you in Babylon? A goy is a goy. You can't come in.”

“You had better come in. The Church is the only place for you if you have left the Temple.”

“It was my grandfather who left the Temple. I have not left it, though I have never personally been in it. If I have to leave the Temple to come into it, then it isn't the Church. I will stand in the middle of the Temple; and if the Church comes to me there, then it is the Church. But my genes still won't allow me to join it.”

On that point he never did break down. He remains the only one of his kind, the only one of exactly that kind. His enemies say that he is neither fish nor flesh. Margaret Stone says that he's some sort of squid (you don't know her yet).

8.

Stein was shot at as a Jew, and as a renegade Jew; as a

Communist, and (much worse) as an anti-Communist. The Titoists shot at Gabby, and the anti-Duffeyites shot at Duffey. The bill collectors persecuted Dotty. Everybody became tougher and they all grew up a little.

For the next several years the group suffered a series of episodes at the hands of W, X, Y, and Z. For reasons of space, W. & Y. have been left out of this chronicle. W. was an apostate, and you have not missed much. Y. was well worth knowing, though, and it is your loss that you have missed him. Or you may already know him; he gets around the country a lot.

Z. was Zabotski. He was a chemist and experimenter of some sort, and he had a huge glass-lined pot or crock that he had used for some distillation experiments. He brought this to Duffey, and that is all he did. But the effect is not ended yet.

It wouldn't go into the building without taking out part of the wall. But walls are easily taken out; they are made of nothing but bricks and mortar, and furring and lathes and plaster inside. In an hour the wall was opened. And in less than a year Duffey got around to repairing it again.

It was a thousand gallon pot or crock, and that is big. It weighed a thousand pounds empty and nine thousand pounds full, which is the weight of four giant percheron horses. Duffey rigged gas burners under it and filled it with water. He announced that he would keep the big crock boiling forever. He got a priest in from St. Katherine's to bless it.

It is to the credit of Dotty that she didn't object to the crock at all, though she didn't understand the purpose of it at first and though she paid the water and gas bills.

"That I be not overly blessed in giving, it is better that this come out of other pockets than mine," Duffey said. He collected fifteen dollars from his own gang there. He went to Zabotski who had given him the pot and insisted that Zabotski give him forty-five dollars in addition. This guy Zabotski loved to get into loud street arguments with Duffey, and the two of them were like an old vaudeville act when they berated each other. Zabotski had a little money, however, and he had known from the first to what use Duffey would put the crock.

Duffey went out and begged and panhandled another forty dollars. Then he bought a hundred bushels of barley, had it hauled to the building, and shoveled it into a little alcove he had built there. It filled the alcove six feet deep.

Duffey announced that he could now serve barley soup to the poor at a cost of a cent a bowl. He did it. He still does it. Whether the crock will keep boiling forever is known only to God, but it has now been boiling for a quarter of a century at least.

But Duffey served only a hundred or so bowls a day at first. "There are just not enough poor people to put the crock to the test," he said. "May God make more poor people for the salvation of the world!"

They had a little kettle there for contributions. Dotty banged a bell sometimes to draw people, and all of them invited the saints to the crock. Roisterers would sometimes come by late at night for bowls of the famous soup, and they would put four bits or a dollar into the collection kettle.

Well, barley soup can become pretty flat over the years. Salt and onions were begged or freely given. Rough fish sometimes came from the markets or from the fishermen. The multiplex cousins of Henry used to send seasonal produce from the Cajun country by the intercoastal-canal boat-men. After X had made his appearance, he produced a fresh dead old horse. They ran that horse-meat through in about a week without mentioning what it was. There is an American prejudice against horse-meat which X, being European, did not understand. They got a boney old cow sometimes; they got game; they even had alligator-tail stew mixed with the barley soup. They had potato soup, they had country greens, they had turnips, and nine kinds of fish. It wasn't really very good for all the onions and leeks and garlic they were sometimes able to add. They finally got it up where they were serving about three hundred meals a day of some sort or other, and somebody managed to be on duty all twenty-four hours of the day for the many years of it.

It was never really a big thing. Duffey's prayers for sufficient poor to test it were not answered. There never will be enough poor for the health of the world until we mend our wicked ways.

But it was always there and it helped some people. Do you remember the time Finnegan and Dotty went on a frolic in the country and raided four bee trees and brought in seventy pounds of honey? Seventy pounds of honey dumped in will make a difference in the taste of almost anything. The Regal brewery sent over a keg of beer to Duffey every week, and this always made a difference in the stew or soup for a little while. Zabotski himself often came by for a bowl of the soup, and it always cost him a dollar. And his voice would blend with Duffey's in a raucousness that could be heard for several blocks.

9.

Now the total antithesis of Z was X, though they were alike in small ways. It even developed that they were of previous acquaintance. But there was a great difference.

Uncap a beer or something for a change of pace. You now enter a different world.

X came to them in this manner. He phoned Duffey about three AM

of an unknown date, and he managed to take him unaware.

"Hello, Doofey," came the voice like no other.

"This is Duffey."

"Doofey, I am calling you on the telephone."

"That much I know. Who are you?"

"That I am not at liberty to say."

"Then why do you call me at three o'clock in the morning?"

"I find this hour the best time to phone. A man is home then, or he should be. He ordinarily will not have another appointment till a little later. He should have had, by then, several hours of sleep, and if so, his mind will be clear as a bell and receptive of my message."

"I can't hear you very well. Perhaps it is better that I can't."

"Of course you can't hear me very well. On the telephone I always talk through a handkerchief impregnated with rosin. And sometimes I talk through my hat literally. This disguises the voice."

"Is this a riddle?"

"A lesser man has spoken of a riddle wrapped in an enigma inside a mystery. I forget which was the outer covering. I am a riddle carrying a mystery that contains the key to a labyrinth. Need I say more?"

"You'd better. Is this Finnegan in a new dialect?"

"No. I saw your Finnegan several days ago but he was not talking dialect. He was sleeping in happy inebriety."

"That's enough of an introduction. Come on over."

"Finnegan was only incidental. I saw one more, but I have information of the multitude. Need I go on?"

"Come over and we'll talk. I have some Bacardi."

"That is for the Finnegan of the world. I create my own intoxication. Do you think I will be followed?"

"Only by the man with the net."

"That is perhaps cryptic for the Fisherman from Saon? You frighten me. I thought that he eyed me with unusual interest. Could he have followed me here in three short weeks."

"I wouldn't have believed it myself. Come on over."

And in a few minutes Mr. X arrived and Duffey looked at him in the light. There was something almost too dirty about this arrival, as though he were made up for a clown. But he was a happy clown with something wistful about him. Dotty came to see what it was.

"What have you there, Duff?" she asked.

"I, lady, am sometimes known as Mr. X," the arrival offered.

"Who isn't. Well, give him a platter of milk and then put him out, Duff. You know we agreed we couldn't afford to keep pets."

"The gentleman invited me over and offered me Bacardi."

"I was fooling. The place is yours, little man. Put him on the sofa,

Duff. He won't need a blanket tonight." As though X should sleep on a sofa or anywhere. As though he ever slept.

Mr. X had put a big black box on the table.

"Doofey, does this box interest you? Do you know what is within?"

"Your laundry."

"What I have, it is true, is inside. But there is something else."

"I am all ears."

"You do have an interesting otology. But inside this black box is a gray box. And inside the gray box, *retine galorum vestrum*, hold onto your hat (I translate loosely), is a brown box."

"*Admiror audiens*, I am surprised to hear it (I also translate loosely); is this a box that I have met before?"

"Doofey, you more than anyone in the world know what is in this box, for it is the box that I have brought from Chicago to you."

"Oh, that one. Did Casey give it to you?"

"You amaze me. There is something child-like about you, Doofey. Naturally he did not give it to me. I stole it from him."

"You shouldn't have stolen it. It is the property of the *Crock*, and he owns that now. He will think that I had a hand in stealing it. No, he knows me better than that. But he will pretend that he thinks I had a hand in stealing it. I will phone him in the morning and explain that I did not."

"If you are going to phone him, then phone him now. It is the perfect time for it. I always say that a quarter after three in the morning is the best time to phone. It is my experience that a man will usually be home then and unoccupied. And, having slept a little —"

"I have heard your theory, X, but charity impels me to wait. Why did you take the box?"

"He was not properly using the material. He was going to sit on it, perhaps even warn some of those it concerns that they were tagged. He has not kept the list active even. He has added only one name to it: his own. You appreciate the irony of that?"

"I appreciate it. Have you seen the data here?"

"Naturally I have memorized it, as I have that of many like collections. I have added information to some of the cards. You will find them written find in my hand with the X below."

"How did you get into the box?"

"Little locks like that I open with mittens on. When I played the circuits I was billed as the Great X-Capo. This is clever. I have quite a bit of talent."

"I see that you have."

"I did not take the liberty of adding any cards. I will do so now, for there are many which interlock so completely with these that I wonder you do not know of them. It is only fair to tell you that my

information is commonly taken *frustu salis*, with a grain of salt, which is how all information on the Infiltrates should be taken.”

“I know it.”

X wrote for about two hours on the file cards that Duffey furnished. X was widely known in a narrow field. He visited congressmen and Justice Department agents at midnight, and spoke in low and confidential earnestness. He received curt tips from Dutch importers and Bucharest rivermen. He heard Nostrodomus-type prophecies from Jesuit experts, and gave back to them some of his own. He was a Party member in both France and Italy under different names. He passed for anything he wished.

Now the fact about him was that almost all his information was true. He could not evaluate, and he had no aims other than the excitement of the game. He himself had been, possibly was, and would be again, the most confounded Red of them all; and the times he had joined the Party he had done so from conviction. But his convictions were short.

He was subject to great seasonal changes, and every Easter he would make his peace with the Church. By midsummer he would be an agnostic again, and by fall an atheist. But more and more, as the years went by, he became interested in collecting information on the Conspiracy and working for its defeat. There were many recipients of his information, and it was retained in private files and in well-indexed corners of private minds.

“But do you know the weirdest thing of all?” X asked. “That is going to someone very high, after great pains to win the opportunity of an interview, and giving him in absolute secrecy the information that you have risked your life to obtain. Then to see the *oculum vitreum*, the glassy eye—”

“You translate loosely.”

“Thank you. To see that look in the eye of the great one, and to know in a sudden flash that he also is one of them. Then you hear one more nail tapped into your coffin.

“You think that I am a funny little man who likes to play Cloak and Dagger? I am that funny little man, but it is not all play. I have the blade of one of those daggers in my left shoulder, and it aches on rainy nights. I have a pellet that comes up like a lump in the muscles at the side of my neck, and I have the nervous habit of fingering it. I was once trussed and weighted and dropped from a garbage scow, and were I less than the Great X-Capo I would not be here to entertain you with the account.

“I am not a phoney when I think that I am followed. More often than not I am followed. And when I die it will be suddenly. I have no habitation or name, and there will be no papers on my body. I will not

even be allowed the last grand moment nor the *Galgensprach*. The spot will be X indeed."

X cleaned himself up a little and then he talked some more.

"Very good men and very evil men have a presence. It is like an aura around them and they cannot be assailed. That is why very evil men often pass for very good men. It is the little men like myself who lack the presence who are open to assault. I am an alley rat. I have traveled a long distance by various devices and I have not, *erubesco id dicere*, changed my socks for four days. Some of the things that I know are so astonishing that I cannot write them till after I am dead.

"But, Doofey, do you know the most courageous thing in the world to do?"

"Not for sure, X, what is it?"

"To flog a dead horse. Brave men blanch at the task and the staunch grow pale. That phrase is the most cutting weapon that we ever have to face. When we pursuer the Conspiracy out beyond the foamy shallows to where it is swift and deep and deadly, then they say that we are flogging a dead horse. The remark sears. The Devil invented the phrase."

"He's an apt phrase-maker. I'm a student of his style," Duffey said.

They talked of diabolism. X was sure that he had talked with the Devil.

"He did not tell me that he was, but he implied as much. He came to my room late at night and talked without prelude. I do not know that he came through the closed door, but I did not hear it open or close and it was a creaky door. He was there till morning.

"He left me frustrated, for he said that nobody would ever believe the things that he told me, and nobody ever has. We went over much of the material that I had collected. He would sometimes correct me on individuals. 'No, he is not one of ours,' he would say, 'I wish he were, I wish he were.' In some cases this left me in confusion for these were men that I seemed to have on sure information. And remembering that he is the Father of Lies, I am still confused.

"He also claimed a number of men that I had no reason to suspect and of who I still do not have independent information. I have never repeated any of this, lest he be lying and I should harm innocent men. He told me that he did physically sit in on some of the high councils and that his person is known to all the inner conspirators."

"Does he know how it will all turn out?"

"No. He doesn't know the future in any continuity. That isn't given to him. He knows it only in isolated interludes, but these are enough to curl the hair of a listener. He has a lot going in his favor. But he is a well-informed person. His knowledge is encyclopedic."

"Couldn't it have been a hoax? One of the Party boys out to scare

you? I have known of instances of humor even in them.”

“It could have been. I have hoped that it was so. Knowing my credulity, it is possible that they have done this: it is comforting to believe so. But he had a scope and aspect that was unnatural. If he was not the Devil, then he had a lot of the Devil in him.

“In another sense, and in another life, I did know the Devil himself. And he was otherwise. I missed his burial, but I did dig him up one night.”

X stayed with them for several days. They became fond of him. In some ways he was child-like. He had a wife in Milano but he had not seen her for years. He told them about it.

“First I left and said I would be back in a week. I was in danger. Then affairs intervened, and it was three weeks before I could return.

“She is a dear woman, but she has the gift of irony. She was sure to remark how long the week had been. I decided to wait several days to see if I could think of a good answer. Then fate intervened again and I had to leave the country.

“The next time that I was in town I discovered that I would be acutely embarrassed to see her. I was overwhelmed with nervousness and apprehension.

“It had been like this when we were younger. It took great courage to speak to her, and when I said ‘hello’ I shook like an aspen. I mean, of course, the *populus tremuloides* of my own land, not the *populus grandidentata* which my comparison has probably evoked in your minds. For, while the American and European aspen are related and both quake, yet they do not quake in the same manner, nor are their leaves even joined in like fashion. However, I shook, I trembled.

“It was a miracle that I ever got up the courage to marry her, but I now discovered that it was not an enduring miracle. In the years that we were married I had gotten over a small part of my bashfulness with her. But now it was all back and more than I would be able to stand. How in the world could I face that beautiful woman again? What can one say to an ironic wife after long absence? I had been younger the first time and had the courage of youth. I have it no longer.

“I fear that I can never face her again. I love her, but the well of courage has run dry. And yet I hear from friends that she is waiting faithfully and wonders why I do not come home.”

When X left them it was in the hours after midnight. Perhaps it was three AM, when one, having slept, should be most alert. But they were not, and they did not hear him go. He took his black box, now filled with sandwiches and clean socks, and left.

Nor did they ever hear of him for many months.

Then they received an envelope with a newspaper clipping. The

date and the city were cut off. It told of an unidentified man of slight build who had been slain. There was an old knife blade in his shoulder and a pellet lodged in the muscles of his neck. And he had no known identity.

The clipping was passed around with some sorrow. But Dotty laughed.

"We thought you liked him as well as the rest of us did," Duffey said. "He was a good little man. Do not be callous about this."

"Now this is only an antic," said Dotty. "He is no more dead than the rest of us are. He is having fun. How can you people investigate international conspiracies when you can't even see through a little joke?"

"It is hardly a joke," said Duffey. "He told me himself that he dagger blade in his shoulder, and that—"

"Of course he did. He told us all. Now you just hold that clipping to your nose. What does it smell like?"

"Why, a little like an oriental gum," said Stein, testing it. "What would you say, Duffey?"

A familiar odor surely. Possibly *guaiacum*, or it could be *clibanum*, or even *sandarse*. What do you think Gabby?"

"*Euryops speciosissimus* probably. I'm not sure."

"Oh stop sniffing," Dotty scolded. "It's a rosin, and you know it. And who do we know who always had his pockets full of rosin? And what kind of press printed that clipping?"

"The fonts are old and bad," Stein hazarded. "I would say a very old, even obsolete press. There are marks of time here that can never be repaired."

"Exactly, the Pelican Press. He printed it here, and dubbed in the reverse before he left. Then he sent it here to entertain us."

Of course that wasn't the end of X. He used to come back to them every year or two, but sheepishly on first return.

10.

"Playing cops and robbers we do not have time for. We are running a little magazine in the Quarter of New Orleans with the simple aim of restoring the world. That is all we can do. The other things we cannot do. If we restore the world, then the other things will already be done.

"We will have no more cryptic extracts from the classified files. We will not look for taints on anyone just because he happens to be a snake or a devil. We will not mistake the mask for the face. This red caricature is not the face of the thing; it is only one of its masks, not the most important one, not the most dangerous one.

"We will work for the Church in the dismembered World, and we will restore the World. That is the way it will be."

She had the backing of Henry in this but they didn't know it. Though when Dotty made up her mind she didn't need the backing of anyone.

Some time after that, Stein and Duffey and Gabby started a sheet called the *Investigator*. Though it was done at the Pelican Press, it was disassociated from the *Bark*. The three men had all established sufficient outside incomes. This helped to make the *Investigator* independent.

Henry was still in the Seminary and there would be several more years for him. In restoring the World, he could aid only indirectly till his time should come.

Mary Virginia Schaeffer had left her father's trucking firm and had come to New Orleans to work with Dotty. It was mostly the ladies who ran the *Bark* after that. Some of them are still running it today. And quite soon an element of spice was added to counter the atmosphere of dangerous sweetness and ease Dotty's mind.

Duffey had again a secondhand bookstore to go with his other activities, and, as necessary in the Quarter, an art shop and an antique shop. He kept his beard white and bright, and added an artist's tie and a beret for the trade. He marketed much of the works of both the Studios and the Pirates' Alley painters. And he wrote eruditely for both the *Investigator* and the *Bark*.

The file on the Infiltrates was kept in his heavy walk-in safe, along with some really valuable works of art (including authentic Van Ghis) and a heavy store of cash, for he also ran a hock shop. He came now to his beginning, not to his end. "Man was meant to be humble," he'd say, "but man was *not* meant to be ordinary. My God, let me not die an ordinary man such as go down into the pit!"

Look out! Here comes the spice.

The *Bark* was joined by Margaret Stone from Chicago. Duffey had known her; and she was kindred of Stein. She had been in the Party, and now she had joined the Church, a move possible for her (as it was not for Stein) for intricate ethnic reasons (they had only half the same genes). Margaret was small and intense, with a large voice only saved from stridency by a certain music in it. She was Italian and Jewish, with possibly a little of the Preadamite in her. She would have been beautiful in repose, but no one had ever seen her so.

Complacency was no part of her, and that dangerous smell of sugar had disappeared from the air. "It is written that if they will not believe Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe one risen from the dead," she said ringingly. "My God, my God, they have *got* to believe the One risen from the dead."

She preached in the street with a fervor that startled the rest of them.

“Why should I not affirm the doctrine of the Real Presence on Dauphin Street at midnight?” she’d challenge. “There are people on Dauphin Street at midnight to whom it has never been preached. That is the only home of those nocturnals; and if they do not hear it then and there they will never hear it.

“This is not easy for me. It was not easy on Pentecost Morning. You people have forgotten. It came to you two thousand years ago and now you haven’t the urgency. But Pentecost came to me one year ago on Pentecost Sunday and I am in a hurry. Doesn’t it frighten you that He said He would vomit the lukewarm out of His mouth?

“Don’t you ever get the feeling that *this night one more must be found*? Imagine the panic of the Patriarch when he could not find Seventy. And the figure was reduced and he still could not find them. This night perhaps something will happen to the world unless one more can be found. He will destroy it if it falls short by even one. I fancy that thousands of times it has just got by, and many times it has just got by by one. And what if I alone can find that one tonight, and the world will stop if I don’t?”

“And who was saving the world before you came along, Margaret?” Dotty asked her.

“Others who knew the urgency. Maybe one of them was worn out and not allowed to die till I came to replace him.”

“You mustn’t let this become a fetish,” Dotty said. “The Lord doesn’t work by deadlines.”

“He says that He does. He ought to know. Maybe you were the one needed on your day. Oh my God, what a thought? What if someone hadn’t gone to work on you before? What if you had refused it?”

11.

At the time of his third or fourth visitation he told them a little about his trip around the world, but he would not tell them all. “I did go around in a way,” he said. “At least it’s possible. The trip disintegrated halfway around.”

“Oh, then you’re still over there?”

“No, I’m back here now. But the way I came back is obscure. I was working below decks in the engine room. Times I was not working I amused myself with a bottle and an amazing library of old comic magazines.

“I’m always hesitant to confess that I don’t know where I am. When they made me get off the boat and take my pay we were in San Francisco, although I’d expected an Atlantic port.

“What if Magellan were so careless and didn’t know if he’d gone around or not?” Dotty asked.

“His position was different. He was in command. I was not.”

Yes, Finnegan was different. They tended to forget just how

different he was when he was gone, and those who had not known him before hardly knew how to take him. Margaret Stone said she already knew him, though. They never did say where.

Finnegan wrote several letters during one visitation, one to Show Boat in St. Louis:

'It is with mixed emotions that I learn I have a God-child *in absentia*. I hope he is a dago. I will not be God-father to an Irishman. I love them, but to be morally responsible for one is more than flesh and blood can stand. Tell Marie that, for as long as she lives, I will have for her only hatred mixed with a certain affection, for she has had two. One is vouched for by the Merry Monk and the other by your own unoutstanding husband. I was promised the first. This was long ago, but I will not be forgotten.

'Dotty is a mess. Dotty says 'Don't write that', but I will write it; the world should know. And whatever Dotty writes in the margins of this after I have finished it, do not believe her. I am sitting on Dotty's knees as I write, and I wish they were yours.

'Yes, I know that was a real diamond I sent you. No, I didn't steal it. I am a diamond merchant. I give them to all my girls. Don't tell Dotty how big it is. Hers is no bigger than a pigeon's egg.

'I love you, Teresa, my odd little sister, in the way we have agreed. The rest of the people in St. Louis I love only in the conventional manner which, while it is capable of shaking mountains and outlasting the stars, still is not quite the same thing. Isn't it too bad that you and I are the only ones who understand this?'

Finnegan also wrote a long letter to Casey in Chicago. Nobody else knew what to write to Casey anymore. They didn't know what to say to him.

And Finnegan answered the letters of Hans. Hans had allowed himself to be trapped: he had not intended to be trapped. He had wished to satisfy the demands of the world by making all the money necessary in three or five years; and then he intended to devote himself to other things. If there is one thing that is very hard to do it is to quit making money. He was grown around and almost covered by the vines that he couldn't hack away. He had made money. He had been astonishingly successful. But he couldn't turn loose of the business. All his gain was in heavy equipment and developing property and futuristic paper.

Marie did not know that he was bothered or that he wanted anything more than this. She wouldn't have understood Hans sometimes envied Finnegan.

12.

'Who the hell is Sally and why am I afflicted? Every time you get pregnant you have another brainstorm, but this one is the limit. This wild-eyed little bushwhacker said that you sent her a thousand dollars to come to America on. But granting that, why is she with us and not with you?

'Dammit Marie, she talks worse than you do and she doesn't look much better. She's a crow. Why don't you contribute to the Childrens' Gin Fund if you have to throw your money away? I gave Mary Margaret Stone a hammer and a rock and a rope and told her to knock Sally in the head and drown her in the river. But she brought her back tonight and said that she couldn't do it. I shouldn't have sent a girl to do a woman's job.

‘But what will I do with Salvation Sally? ‘I’m the one you’re looking for,” she says. ‘That little Wop-Jew girl is the only one you have who knows how to street-preach, and you think you don’t need me?’

‘We were getting on so well, but then we’re not supposed to get on well. You are a filthy Irishman, Marie, and you have played a filthy Irish trick on me. Stein is tuning that guitar of hers but I doubt if anything will ever take the twang out of it. Stein knew her in Australia too. What the hell went on down there?’

‘I had the flu and now I have Sally. I have been taking aspirins. Now Belonki wants me to try his joy pills. I am tempted. But the saccharine kid (Mary Schaeffer) likes Sally. I thought if I left them in a room together they would eat each other up and there be nothing left but *tre file d’oro* (I think that means three blonde hairs, it’s from Dante via Finnegan) and a short length of guitar string. I guess it doesn’t work for anything but cats in a sack, though. Mary says we have to keep her. It’d cost another thousand dollars to send her home. Sally spent all she had left on those more unfortunate than herself. More unfortunate than herself, is that possible? We were in danger of turning Pollyanna till Margaret and Sally came. That danger is gone now.

‘Tell Hans that if you should die suddenly, and I certainly hope you do, we’ll get married and chuck this world-saving business. Finnegan hasn’t written since he left last. The boys call me Penelope, but my suitors (*j’en ai*) keep up my spirits.

‘Marie, I love you and yours. Write me every week and forgive me my crabbishness. But don’t ever do a thing like that again.

—Dotty

In some ways this group was unusual. They loved a little luxury, but they defended Poverty as one of the transcendent things. “It’s like drink,” Stein said once. “In moderation it is a bright gift of God, but in its extreme it becomes sordid. But Hell waits for him who would abolish either of these glorious things.”

They all knew a little Dago housewife in St. Louis, and sometimes Mary came and drank coffee with her in the kitchen. “What is the wonder?” Dotty asked. “Why doubt it.”

There are many ways to go about it. This was their way. They labored in the world, letting neither hand know what the other did: and if all their works were written, they would fill every book in town. And because of this little group, the world was not destroyed in those decades but was given respite.

13.

Regnum Dei auferetur

Mundus ignet comburetur: Ut scriptura impleretur.

Inimicus seminavit:

Suse luce reparavit

Sicut Moyses exaltavit.

Si vis potes me mundare?

Potens Deus suscitare,

Et *compelle* ut intrare.

Nonne vobis intellectus?

Praedicabitur in tectis;

‘*Hie est filius delectus!*’

Tu Melchisedech secundum
Surgens nimis nunc jucundum.
Deus tam dilexit mundum!

—Seminary assignment in Latin Prosody by Henry Salvatore.

But Henry was marked down for that assignment. “Latin isn’t Italian enough to have italics,” the instructor priest said. “They’re not allowed.”

This one was about Henry but he was hardly in it. Yet it was he who set this apparatus in motion. He was not Iason, of course; he had not been chosen for that role: but he was Euphemus, and he was the real pilot of the ship.

“You were a better poet than I would have thought,” said Finnegan when he had read it in the old pamphlet.

Casey went to high school at St. Bonaventure's, a boarding school forty miles from his home; and when he went there he left many of his old dreams behind.

Casey started to college in the fall of 1938. He went on and off until mid-spring of 1942 when he joined the army. He went to Notre Dame, to DePaul, to Northwestern, to Marquette, and to the University of Chicago. He went to two other colleges whose names he never mentioned later. They never mention his name either.

Chapter Six

Casey the Crock, or the Losing of Peleus

1.

Ici Parle Tristram

“I know of an Island in the Sea
Where the days seems always gold:
It's called to me now for nights come three,”

Said Tristram to Isolde.

Ici Parle Isolde

"T'was all of last night that I dreamed a dream
And I stood before a pit,
And the watchful hands of the Virgin Queen
Would guard me away from it."

Ici on Raconte

The waves lapped weird neath the evening sky
And the distance far was strung
Till one might see if he looked full high
The chains where the stars were hung.

Ici Parle Tristram

"The wind it has risen against us now,
And hard way back we'd mark;
But the isle of my heart lies off our prow
But a little ways in the dark."

Ici Parle Isolde

"But the sound of the bells it is rising higher
And they wield a woeful power.
'*Quo vadis, filia mea?* they 'quire
From the darksome old church tower."

Ici Parle Tristram

"A little more and we lose our way
When waters more have flowed,
But think of palaces builded gay
With silver fire and gold."

Ici Parle Isolde

"I pray that you take me back," she said,
"For the stars no longer twire,
And the clouds are a-grumbling above our head
And the levin dances fire."

Ici on Raconte

And far away clanged the old Church Bell
With a mournful melody,
And the small boat rode like a cockerel shell
On the heave of the gurley sea.

Ici Parle Isolde

"And now I bethink me of my dream
When I stood before the pit,
And the hold hands of the Virgin Queen
Would guard me away from it.
"But something is drawing me there," she said,
"Oh row to your Island far,
Though the wild storm break and the skies flash red,
Ne twire a single star."

Ici on Raconte

And never they did return again,
And a wonder came to stay
With the poor ar-men and the fisher-men
That the Twain had gone astray.
So sin came back to the world's face
Whence whilom it were bound,
And touched each high and lowly place
And eke the Table Round.

Ballads of Kasmir Szymanski, Juvenilia, Privately Printed, The Crock, Chicago.

"I was better than I am now," Casey said, "and it's a truer poem than you know. The fall from grace always comes before the doubt. We who are doubters try to deny this. I am not sure that I am able to. I wonder if my own dirty fall from grace will ever have poems or operas written about it?"

"Not unless you do them yourself," said Finn, "and you probably will."

Casey sketched his life to Finnegan on the several evenings they were together that time, and the other parts he had told him back in the Island days. This may have been during the first visit, but it was more likely during the second or third trip that Finnegan made to Chicago to see Casey.

This isn't entirely the way that Casey told it. This is the way Casey told it as adjusted by what Finnegan knew of Casey. Finnegan always applied a certain coefficient of deflation when considering Casey, as did others. If told in Casey's own words it would put Casey in a much grander light.

Kasmir W. Szymansky (Casey) was born in Chicago on October 7, 1921, the son of Gabriel Szymansky a pawnbroker and antique dealer, and Miriam Lessing. He was an only child, and that is much of what was the matter with him.

With Casey there would always be a problem, a special one, which Casey himself has said is the only problem in the world of any importance.

'The problem of evil,' said Petit, 'for every thinking and reflecting man is a riddle he cannot escape, a disorder introduced voluntarily, by a free decision, into the divine handiwork.'

The problem of evil, says Genesis, is innate 'for the heart of man is evil from his youth.'

The problem of evil, said Pope, is a devouring one—'And hence one master passion in the breast, like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.'

The problem of evil, says Amos, remains a puzzle: 'Shall there be evil in a city which the Lord hath not done?'

The problem of evil, said Pythagoras, is one of cataloging. And he listed under good: 'Limit, even, one, right, male, rest, straight, light, square.' And under evil: 'the unlimited, odd, multitude, left, female, motion, curved, darkness, oblong.'

It is true that the abstraction of Evil is a curved, dark, female, multitudinous thing and of the left, but it is much more than that, and Pythagoras is incomplete.

"The Problem of Evil," said Casey, "is the only problem in the world. Were it not for that, we would have no problems at all. And if we cannot solve it, then we cannot solve anything else. Myself and my four brothers (not of blood) are the only people I know well in the world. I know that we all have this very strongly; that each of us has his way of handling it; and that none of the ways will work.

"You yourself, Finnegan, seem to disdain the whole thing, like the small boy who wet his pants and argued that it wasn't he who did it, that it must have been someone else. Or like the early Augustine 'For I still held the view that it was not we who sinned, but that sin was committed in us by some being of a different kind.' Finn, there is no one in you but yourself."

"Casey, there is a whole town in me."

"Let it go. Vincent has been one of the quiet-desperation men in this. He is a very patient boy. If he loses a foot he will gain back thirteen inches. He is the only plodder in the world I ever admired, and I may be the only one who knows that he is a plodder. The question is whether the Thing can be contained by a containment policy. I'm pretty sure that it can't be whipped in any other way.

"Henry tried it all with one stroke. He would not hesitate to hack off a hand or pluck out an eye if it were called for. He threw in everything he had, and more. He somehow believed it would be enough. It won't be.

"What if the hand grew back as maleficent and the eye as evil as before? He'd burn his whole self for it, and there's a lot of him. But what if this Saving the World business of him and his is only the worship of a fetish? Consider him forty-five years from now when he is still the immovable body as well as the irresistible force. See him as just another fat and cranky Cajun priest with his thunder full of cracks. Consider him a puffy old bore. Consider him as self-justified. Finn, it could happen."

"It could not. Heaven and Earth may pass away, but Henry will never be either a bore or self-justified. The world will never get that old."

"Let it go. Hans enjoys battling dragons, even the one in his own intestines. He shines up his sword with brillo and hacks away at the thing; I'm sure that he passes a few hydra-heads every morning. But he

doesn't kill it in himself, no more than we do. The war that is never won is always in danger of being lost. I worry about him sometimes. He's the most passionate man we ever knew. Should he slip just a little, he would become gross. I'd hate to see him become common, but he could turn into a lout."

"He could not, Casey. By his very nature he could never become one. He has no trace of hypocrisy, whatever else is in him. He may have a lot of clay in him, but none of it is in his head."

"Let it go. With myself it is no so much the feet of clay as the gumbo-head. I am not the stupidest of you; I am very nearly the smartest of the lot. If there is one thing that makes me seem stupid it is that I have seen what the rest of you haven't. I have seen the odds on us posted. It is said that if we saw the odds against us at the beginning of any endeavor we'd never start. Well, I have seen the odds, and I do not endeavor much."

Casey sowed a field with dragons' teeth. It was ordained from the beginning that one of the company must do this. It was one of the Heroic Labors, the least understood of them.

Casey had been an unmuscular and moody boy who held his own at games only by organizing, inventing, and changing the rules. In classes he did better, with less time, and more ability. He began on the business of books earlier than most and learned the mechanics of learning. More than at school, he got his education from the bookshelves of Melchisedech Duffey, his father's part-time partner. And he got an education from his father in spite of the both of them. Between the father and Casey there was natural antipathy; yet Casey was willing to learn Polish and German from him.

Casey was troubled and imaginative from the start. There are those who live always in a dream world. Casey lived in twelve of them.

The first was that of sports. It was not the sports of the playgrounds, for which he cared little, but that of the sports pages and record books. When Casey was eight years old he wrote his own records, the most amazing set ever. They were mostly of baseball but there were sections of other contingent or parallel careers in other sports.

But for one thing, Casey would have had the best record of any pitcher who ever lived, with well over a thousand games won, and more than one hundred no-hitters. But for one thing, he would have been the first one hundred home-run hitter. But for one thing, he would have been the greatest running back ever, with an incredible sixteen and a fraction yards per carry. And for what other athlete would they have arranged the entire national schedules to enable him to play professional baseball and football both. But for one thing, he would have pitched two hundred consecutive scoreless innings.

The one thing was that his mother found his notebooks and tore them up and told him to go out and play, as he was getting that pasty look. She also ridiculed the contents of the record books with a sort of scorn that was peculiar to her.

“ ‘Casey Syman’ indeed! ‘Extracts from the Official Blue Book of the year 2001, special anniversary edition for the 80th birthday of the greatest player of them all!’ ”

The records were all there, written beautifully, for Casey always wrote a fine hand. She tore them up and threw them out. This was an exasperating end of what could have been a great career. She didn't understand her son or she wouldn't have torn them up.

The second of the imaginary worlds of Casey was an erotic one which also began before he was eight. This was a chameleon life, incoherent and fantastic, and included girls from history and legend, queens and nymphs. There were amazons and female gladiators, Cretan girl bullfighters, circus girl acrobats. Casey had terrible nights with them, for they were as treacherous as the temptations of St. Anthony and as beautiful. They may even have been the same bunch of girls. Casey had an early theory of the ubiquitousness of personal temptations: the continuity of evil coupled with chromatic beauty.

The third of the dream worlds had a religious background, though perhaps no religious element. It took the form that he later called Fortress Christianity, of his being one of a steadfast persecuted minority which combined cleverness and courage to stay ahead of the butchers. There were comings and goings, and hidden names and priest rooms, and prisons and torture. The background was either early Roman Empire or Recusancy England. This was the Fortress Minor.

The Fortress Major was a beleaguered city or fortress indeed, with all the faithful inside and the enemy swarming the walls like giant spiders as the tower bells tolled hour after hour. Later his idea of being one of a persecuted minority was a strong force in the complex that brought him into the party.

The fourth of the worlds was literary. Casey would delineate and give shape to the whole shapeless world. He would write ten thousand words a day, as he could easily do when he had attained facility. That would be a book every ten days and would make him rich and famous. He could do it in five hours a day, which is enough for anyone to work when he has a lot of talent. He would be the American Balzac, only greater. In times to come, Balzac might be spoken of as the French Szymansky.

The fifth of the worlds was that of the explorer. To make this world possible it was necessary that there had been made a serious mathematical and cartological error, and that it had been repeated

countless times without proper checking. The possibility had to be entertained that the world was fifty percent larger than we had believed it; that it be not round but melon-shaped. This was Casey's theory of the elongated poles. Antarctica was not so at all. It was an ice ring, not an ice cap; and beyond it was room for a southern sea and a sunny southern continent. This was probably Atlantis which had migrated at the time of the dispersal of the continents. When Casey would journey back and forth between this new-found southern continent and the rest of the world he would enjoy advantages both ways. He would bring modern techniques to the southern land, and from it he would bring back the Higher Ethic.

The Higher Ethic was also related to the sixth of the dream worlds. It had no connection with the Fortress Religion of the third world, nor indeed with his own religion. He first got the idea from a magazine ad that he answered very early in life. He got the material from the ad, and not from the material that they sent him, for that was a washout. Nevertheless, this literature which they sent became the first unit in the esoteric library which he later built up.

He got another inkling one winter night after he had served Benediction. About a dozen of the more prominent men of the parish came back through the sacristy. Then they went into the book-lined study of the monsignor and closed the door. They were all very rich. However, only one of two of them commonly came to Benediction. Actually the meeting was in preparation for a fundraising drive, but the fact of it gave Casey ideas of a higher religion practiced only by the very rich; possibly only the monsignor, and not the young priests, knew about this.

Casey heard phrases in sermons sometimes that might be taken in a different way, as intended to identify a practitioner in the speaker. Once a visiting Salesian spoke in the words of the Householder bringing from his treasury things old and new, and he spoke with an odd emphasis which made Casey think that he held the key. But this was the closest that Casey ever came to the secret; and if there was a higher religion practiced only by the very rich, he never found it.

The seventh of the hidden worlds of the mind had to do with linguistics. Casey dreamed of learning all the languages of the world. Casey worked harder to the realization of this goal than any of the others. From his father he had German and Polish, and those were keys to whole groups. From the children in the block he had Italian, from the confectioner on the corner Greek; from the encyclopedic Duffey, Yiddish and Hebrew and Irish. Swedish from the kids one block to the west. And then there were the Thimms and Hugos and Marlboroughs self-taught manuals on the shelves at Duffey's, the Berlitz and Cortina and Langenscheidt, and the little Metoula manuals

written in German.

A totality of success in this was realized by him in night dreams sometimes, when he knew new languages intuitively. There was once that he spoke Basque that he had never seen nor heard; he spoke it with a shepherd on the top of a mountain. There was once that he spoke old Phoenician with a most odd traveler. It was Casey's liking for languages which later led to his acceptance by John Schultz and his entry into the Dirty Five.

The eighth of the worlds to which Casey withdrew was that of Art. Casey was awkward with pencil, pen, brush, and knife; he could find no medium. But he could visualize and compose and arrange, and he never had a doubt that he was right in his feeling. Even Finnegan had respect for his judgment. Mostly he closed his eyes and created. It was a tragedy that the world's greatest artist could find no medium of expression.

The ninth of the worlds in Casey's head was that of the overturners. Casey was a revolutionary from the beginning and he hated the rich. His own father was rich, but Casey thought that he was poor. Gabriel Szymansky had two shops that were back to back, facing on two different streets, with a foot passage under the alley. On the rich street he was an antique dealer, on the poor street he was a pawnbroker. He did well, but he talked a tight bargain and (being stingy) gave his son the impression that he was poor.

Anyhow, Casey aligned himself with the poor, and not with the placid poor. He imagined the workers coming out of the packing houses armed with hackers and saws, and the truck-drivers with tire irons and lengths of chain: the steelworkers would bring some kind of puddlers or pokers, and the torpedoes with their sawed-off shotguns would line up with the rising workers like Jean Lafitte and his pirates with Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans. Artillery would be set up in the streets and parks. Skyscrapers would be toppled with a few terrible volleys, and all the factory smokestacks also. Then a fire would be started greater than the original Chicago fire (which had no social significance) and the whole town would be left in cinders. Casey liked to recite the lines of Belloc:

'And melt the gold their women wore — And hack their horses at the knees,
And hew to death their timber trees —'

The tenth of Casey's worlds was worldliness, always set about five years in the future, and that from the time when he was no more than five; and with himself as a man of money and prestige and social worth. He would have a flash car and a flash girl, someone like Evelyn or Mary Jean or Mary Carruthers, whichever one grew up prettiest. He would have a rack full of tuxedos and that other kind of suit, and would be lionized by the people he chose to be with. This was the only one of the dreams that ever came true, for now it had done so.

Casey did, in one way or another, have his choice of those three girls. He did have an uptown apartment, and he did make the best bistros. He went where the conversation and music were the finest according to his own ear and appreciation. Nor was this entirely ashes when it came to him.

The eleventh and twelfth facets of his hidden worlds were the least attractive, for they contained the real flaws of his character, flaws he could never conquer. One of them was a deep sadism which included torture reveries of animals and beautiful girls. The other was a catalog of revenges. He considered himself much wronged, and for dozens of persons he had designed revenges, subtle and sensuous, some of them frightening. These would resolve all the many grudges that he held. But he accumulated grudges faster than he was ever able to devise revenges.

During one of those weeks that they were together, Casey told these old day and night dreams to Finnegan. He would not have told them to anyone else even of the Dirty Five. There was one other thing about Casey that will be mentioned just once and then never referred to again. This is because he was all too aware of it and his friends had conspired never to notice it in the hope of his forgetting it a little. Casey was very good-looking; he was handsome; his appearance was outstanding. He looked larger and stronger than he was. He looked more humorous and more friendly than he was. There was no better looking man anywhere, ever.

And now that this is understood, there will be no more reference to the appearance of Casey.

2.

In St. Martin's Hall, the boys lived, not in dormitories, not in small rooms, but in chambers, six boys to a room. Each boy had a black-blanketed bed, a wall locker with wardrobe and shelf, a study desk, and a chair. There was also a large center table, and bookshelves on which were furnished a Dictionary, Bible, Missal, Rule of St. Benedict, and an Atlas. The rest of the books were the boys' own.

With Casey were Hinnegan, Johnny Carruthers, Dominic Vinobianco, and an old enemy Germany Metzger. These all got along well. In many combinations, Casey would not have gotten along at all. For the sixth boy there was always one senior in the room for room captain. Here too they were fortunate, for they had that perennial senior, Buttercup Butler. Buttercup wasn't very smart. He looked like an owl, but he did have a sort of wit. He was the smallest boy in the room and was no help with the lessons as a senior is supposed to be. Hinnegan was a farm boy.

"In a way he was like you, Finn," said Casey as he told him about them. "His name wasn't Hinnegan, I don't believe: it was Hannigan or

Hanlon or O'Hanlon or such. But since I have known you I have reconstructed him in my mind to rime with you, so he is Hinnegan now and that is the way he is going to be."

Vinobianco was from Elgin. Johnny Carruthers came with Casey from Chicago, as did Germany Metzger.

Casey kept notebooks while at school. In one he wrote down everything he thought about. In another one he wrote down everything that he read. He read 251 books, but it takes three pages to list them and you'd skip it anyhow. If you read, you also have read them; if you don't, then you wouldn't care to hear about them. The only reason to list them would be as part of a guide on how to construct another Casey, and there is none who doesn't believe that one Casey is enough. But what he actually thought about in High School was summed up in the first notebook:

- I. It is better to be a fool than dead, or halitosis is better than no breath at all.
- II. Never pitch a low inside to a pigeon-toed batter.
- III. Russian fiction is like German music, the best in the world. Someone wrote that.
- IV. 'Our anger against fools is a natural faculty of conservation, like the sensitiveness of the nerves of the skin.' Belloc wrote that.
- V. 'Everything that is commonly called poetry in the mother tongue may in some way be traced back to William Count of Poitou.' He wrote that too, or else somebody that I read at about the same time.
- VI. 'Happiness is a journey, not a destination.'
- VII. Magnesite is used chiefly in the manufacture of refractory bricks for furnace linings.
- VIII. Iscamyl Acetate is commonly known as Banana Oil.
- IX. You add three to the skull index to get the cephalic index. This means that there are more live round heads than dead ones. I know one live round head who is going to be a dead one if he doesn't stop fooling around.
- X. If you can learn to play the musical saw you've got it made, but it's not something you just pick up. Hinnegan is teaching me. They learn things like that on farms.
- XI. The volume of a sphere is the diameter cubed times pi divided by six. A lot of people don't know that. I was the only one who knew it today.
- XII. They don't know what color Cro Magnon man was because you can't tell from bones. He may have been a shine.
- XIII. A K (hard C) sound in Latin turns into an H sound in German or English. And an F into a B, and a P into an F. A G in Greek is likely to be a ZH in Russian, and it would be a K in German or English. This is known as Grimm's Law.
- XIV. Power Factor is the cosine of the angle of lag between voltage and current in an A.C. circuit.
- XV. Venice, Italy is further North than Vladivostock, Siberia. You could win bets on this if people weren't so damned afraid of being taken.
- XVI. Bakelite is made out of formaldehyde and gum arabic. Hinnegan and I have started a book and are going to write down all the formulas in the world.
- XVII. Putty is made out of chalk and linseed oil.
- XVIII. The beard of wheat is called the awn, and the chaff-cup is the glume. A lot of people don't know these words.
- XIX. There are left-handed and right-handed rocks depending on the way they are formed and the type of cleavage. A lot of people don't know about this.
- XX. Dutch Friesian is the nearest language to English. There is a sentence that is

the same in both languages: 'Good butter and good cheese Is good English and good Fries.'

XXI. It is fun to say the Great Spiral Nebula of Andromeda, but hard to bring it into a conversation. The same goes for the Magellanic Clouds. But you can bring in one you can bring in the other.

XXII. The Gypsies claim that they founded Rome and that it is named for them, the Romanies. They have the same word for Yesterday and for Tomorrow; for To Begin and To End. And they have the same word for Life and Death, *Meropen*. They never get mixed up because of the way they use them. *Pal* is a Gypsy word, and so is *chiv* for knife. And *stir* when it means prison; their word is *stiropen*.

XXIII. There is a poltergeist in the bell tower of Subiaco Hall. Hinnegan and I went there without a light at midnight on a bet. We had sacks thrown over our heads by somebody, and got beaten up, and it wasn't a poltergeist that did it. We think we know who did it. But that doesn't prove that there isn't a poltergeist there. There isn't any way to prove that there isn't anything. Because you never see one doesn't prove that there isn't one.

XXIV. A Free Martin is a sterile heifer born a twin to a bull calf. Heifers born twins to bulls are nearly always sterile. I've learned a lot about farms from Hinnegan.

XXV. Hinnegan says the Milesians were in Ireland before the Flood. I tell him that the only way we could know about this would be if Noah had brought two Irishmen onto the ark along with two of all the other animals. This made him kind of mad. Hinnegan doesn't have a scientific mind.

XXVI. Girls with skinny legs and sort of double-jointed wrists are likely to be witty. Girls with black hair and blue eyes are snooty.

XXVII. Sloe gin dates one as an adolescent. The only people who drink it are high school children. Hinnegan and I have started to take a shot of whisky every morning and night with a tot glass of hot water. We consider this a more grown-up drink.

XXVIII. When you see signs like Ye Olde Tea Shoppe, the first letter isn't a Y, it is a Thorn, an Old English TH. A lot of people pronounce it Y instead of TH.

XXIX. The word Surround isn't related to the word Round. It is a short doublet form for Superundate, to be completely covered as with waves. An Island isn't a body of land completely surrounded by water. A Lake is a body of land completely surrounded by water.

XXX. Almost all the arable land in the world was once worm casings.

XXXI. Juliet was only fourteen years old. I tell Mary Catherine that that is as old as we are and that we ought to get married before we are too old to enjoy it. She says no. Mary Catherine has more sense than I have.

XXXII. Who is a great man? Leonardo wrote: 'Why following on great pestilences the rivers become deeper and run clear, though previously they were wide and of but little depth and always turbid.' And he wrote even sillier things than that.

XXXIII. Aristotle wrote: 'The Lynx conceals his urine because it is used for many purposes, usually the making of signets.' And that's one of the best things he wrote, not the worst. I had a dime ring with a yellow stone and I told Mary Catherine it was made out of dog's such but she got mad.

XXXIV. I had a howler picked out in Locke, but then I went on reading for a long time, and when I came back to the howler it didn't mean what I thought it meant at first.

XXXV. Johnny Carruthers says that the will is indestructible. The mind and the will survive death. Since hypnotism is by the will you could be hypnotized by a dead man.

XXXVI. Dominic has a sister named Annina. I keep thinking about her all the time.

XXXVII. Johnny Carruthers had a book, *Physics Without Mathematics*. This is like

a head without brains. People who don't like mathematics are people who don't like to think. People who can't learn mathematics are people who can't think. Mathematics is the whole thought of Physics; Mathematics is almost the whole of thought.

XXXVIII. A good rule is 'Don't read about it; read it.' In most cases the originals are clear but the interpretations by others are muddy. I read three books about Shaw and couldn't find what Shaw was about; then I read Shaw and found what he was about. Then I read his Quintessence of Ibsenism, but couldn't see what Ibsen was about. I had to read Ibsen to see what Ibsen was about.

XXXIX. The Great Lakes are the American Mediterranean. Their hinterland is more fertile, their coasts more varied, their Africa better watered, their Greece more green, their Spain more wooded, their Illyria nobler, their Italy more golden, their grain higher, their men taller. All this, and Chicago too. And Chicago is the capital of the world, the city that is in the center of the sea that is the center of the continent that is in the center of the world. A lot of people don't know how I feel about Chicago.

That wasn't the last past of the notebook. There was much more to it. Casey learned all this while in high school. A lot of people didn't learn near as much.

3.

Casey had a lot of bad luck with his colleges. It was mostly his fault. Eight or ten weeks was as long as he would stay in one school. Then he would leave under a cloud. He would disappear for days, he would turn up in police court, he would go on benders, he would write poetry for *Poetry*, he would sit in back-rooms and play 'Moon' around the clock.

It was in those days that he started the first of the *Crocks*. The idea dated back to St. Bonaventure's. There had been a school paper there called the *Towers*. It had been dominated by the boys from Gregory Hall, and the 'Towers' on the masthead were the high towers of Gregory. Then the boys in St. Martin's brought out the *Chambers*. St. Martin's was called the Chambers, as it had six-boy rooms, chambers; all the other halls had only dormitories or two-boy rooms.

This *Chambers* was in manuscript only and the mastheads, each drawn individually by Audifax O'Hanlon, showed a row of chamber pots very similar in silhouette to the Towers of Gregory.

So it happened one afternoon that Casey was drinking in a College Inn instead of attending a lecture called Essence and Quintessence at College. Now the name of a thing is part, but not all, of the essence; and it is not the quintessence. But in the beginning it has to have a name.

The first three of the *Crocks* were the *Nattkarlet* the *Night Charley*, and the *Nocnik* which is Polish. These were always clandestine student magazines, but never outrageous except in some manuscript versions. Their continuums today are much worse than when Casey had them. The *Pot* as now circulated is foul, the *Night Charley* is definitely salacious. *To Karkik Kariki* adds constant reference to an attributed old

Greek trait to its Greek name. None of this is what Casey intended. Casey was never filthy. There was high country humor in what Casey put out, and some real worth.

Casey started one or more of the *Crocks* at each of the seven colleges he attended, but he always lost control of them after two or three weeks. There are many imitations today. A manuscript *Orinal* circulates at the University of Mexico, and a *Tucalul* is behind the Iron Curtain.

Casey moved the last of the *Crocks* to the back-room of Duffey's bookstore and brought it out there on a little press. It quickly reached a few dozen people around the country, even became known in a sort of way, enough so that Casey was ticketed for future reference.

Casey at this time had come into money from his father's estate. He used a lot of it, but he kept careful count. Never in his life did he run out of it.

Casey ran around a lot with the girls. There was Mary Catherine, the sister of his friend Johnny Carruthers. There were Evelyn and Mary Jean whom he had known all his life. And Annina Vinobianco. Most of the time he was engaged to Mary Catherine, but it was on and off so much that they sometimes forgot which one had the ring.

When Casey was in college, Mary Jean got married. This suddenly made her very desirable to him. Mary Jean had black hair and blue eyes; she was snooty. She had always had more money; now she had a great deal of money. She had always had her own way; now she made a great show of having her own way. She kept Casey completely subject to her, though he did not realize that this was the fact.

Casey joined the army suddenly. This was at the suggestion of the husband of Mary Jean. It was a peculiar interview. Casey was afraid of Hillary the husband.

"If you were a man, Casey," Hillary told him, "I would kill you. I cannot in conscience kill such an overgrown and unformed larva. You can be down at the station in twelve minutes and you can enlist in the army. You are going in my car with this man here, and I know that you will be there in twelve minutes. And I know that you will join because you are afraid to do anything else, and besides this man with you is going to insist upon your joining. When you come back in a few years, you may be a man, and then I can kill you. Isn't that something to look forward to, Casey?"

Casey was only six months short of being a man legally and this hurt him. But he was afraid, and he enlisted. He joined the army in April of 1942 and had an interesting time of it for four years.

He was in some ways the least of the Dirty Five. In nothing was he first. He was second in many things: in knowledge to Hans, in talent to Finnegan, in social position to Vincent, in stubbornness to Henry. In

compassion he was very close to Hans, but he hid this quality better.

But he was a full member of a club that was unique in the world, with a Fat Frenchman, a banana-nosed river rat, a lace-curtain Irishman, and a kraut-head who was at the same time Faust and Apollo.

“There is a lot of shame in my life, Finnegan,” Casey said, “and it isn't over with.”

They talked for several evenings they were together.

But there was more to Casey than this. There are things that cannot be communicated and yet call out their presence. If there had been no more to Casey than this, Finnegan wouldn't have bothered with him, and neither would the rest of them.

Who is Iason, but Who is Also of the Other People

It was very lyric and very early, the false dawn before the summer sunrise. The whole world was rustling, and somewhere water was dripping. There was a bloom on the morning. The dew was heavy. An overly sweet smell was abroad, a little like a fruit market gone stale. A bird called; there is a bird that stirs before the mockingbird that stirs before the lark. But it has never been identified; it is always too dark to see it. It calls only in the very early morning, and is silent until the next morning.

This is very early in the wanderings of Finnegans, though this sort of morning happened many times. There is no way to put his wanderings into real order; they defy chronology. Much of what is listed here happened before other things already narrated.

Casey was into it all right. His eyes were open and he was right in the middle of it. Finnegan stayed on there for about three weeks. He set himself up a cot in the back of the print shop. He felt that he was in the way in the apartment where the conspirators met.

Not long afterwards there was a drink that didn't taste right to Casey. He sent it back, but the second one was likewise lacking in something: so he knew it not the drink that was insipid, but himself.

Chapter Seven

Finnegan

1.

I'll drive me a boat, with oar, donkey, and sail
To Cayman and Kingston and Moule,
And beaches at Clarence and Mona and Baile,
And Castres and Passamagoule.
The Desert is burning at Yenbo and Lith,
The Sea is on Fire at Zuqar;
And I will go over the mountains to Chith,
And down with the divers at Ghar.
I'll climb Sinai's rocks to the thunder-clad crest,
And learn all that Moses forgot,
And see if the bush is at Hebron or Hest,
And if it is burning or not.
The sea birds return to Dutch Harbor in June,
The Dragons to Yushu in May;
And summer's eternal in Roi, and Rangoon,
And Kandi, and Kuri, and Cai.
I worry the rovers omitted a land,
Now saw what they ought to have seen.
I'll cover the globe with the palm of my hand
And be where I never have been.
I'll visit the towns with the towering names
That can only be writ in iamb,
And get myself scorched in the Barbary flames,
And washed in the blood of the Lamb.
They tell me Ravenna is sweet in the spring
And Malmo is crisp in the fall.

They say that the Kraak has a retrograde wing,
And no one has seen it at all.
The Dutchman still sails from the Gulf of Oman
And carries a cargo to Ctuch.
There's gold on the ground at the Cape of Delgan,
And nobody bothers it much.
I'll slide in a sloop through a pass at St. Vince,
And shine at the bar at the Ritz,
And drink like a sailor and dine like a prince,
And sleep on the sand at St. Kitts.
I worry the Argonauts rended their sheets
And mired in the Friesian bogs;
I wonder if all the Illyrian fleets
Were lost in Illyrian fogs.
The cork oaks are green and the olives are gray,
The quinces have bloomed and the pear;
And it may be that Lisbon still looks at the bay;
You never will know till you're there.
I'd better go look at the Indies this spring,
I'd better go check on the Horn,
For these are the regions that fall in my ring,
For this is the cause I was born.
I have to go talk to the oyster at home,
I have to go down from the strand;
And I will go out for a while on the foam
And forget that I lived on the land.

These verses were found by Dotty one afternoon in some of the papers of Finnegan. There were more that may or may not have been crossed out, and there were others unfinished with their rimes unfound. One of the marked through stanzas went like this:

I'll have me a home in a shanty in Spain
And a hut on a rock in the Rhine,
And a raft on the Yom with a roof for the rain,
And a cabin of balsam and pine.

And there was one that went:

I ought to go visit La Paz and Lierre
And make them acquainted with me,
And Dublin and Derry, they surely are there,
I really had ought to go see.

These may have been marked through, though. There were a lot of marks on the paper. And there were some more stanzas that it was impossible to read, for Finnegan wrote with a pencil, and the papers were worn and rubbed. Everything about Finnegan was worn and rubbed, and he was a wanderer from before he was born.

Giovanni (John) A. Solli was born in New Orleans on June 1, 1919, son of Giulio Solli and Mary McCracken: he had a brother Giacomo and a sister Patricia.

Actually that is all in the world that is known about him for sure. Beyond these facts, everything is shaky. Later things about Finnegan that involved others are not remembered by those others in the same way. The most simple things about him contain amazing confusion.

The first one around here who knew him was Dotty. Before the war, he had started to come into the bar where she worked. He had his banana nose in full bloom and was plainly from the Italian half of the family. There seemed to be no parents at that time, and Finnegan was not really close to either his brother or sister.

Giacomo had become Jake and was a smooth-talking Irishman who drove taxis and steered tourists. He was not really a high-class man, and did not care for his dago brother except to borrow money from him and make jokes about him. The sister Patricia cared for Finnegan a little more. She was an acrobatic dancer of a striking beauty that was at the same time weird and comical. She moved with sudden lithe strength. The only other one who moved like that was Finnegan, and it was not quite a human way of moving. Patricia was often in Finnegan's company.

But there was another close acquaintanceship of Patti so eerie that it scared Dotty. This was Doppio di Pinne, Dopey the Seaman, who would sometimes come in with Patti, but who was never in town at the same time that Finnegan was. "This is my brother also," Patti said once. "In fact, he is the same person as Finnegan. When Finnegan was young, he was Finnegan most of the time, but sometimes he was Doppio. We never did understand it."

Patrish would sometimes check with Dotty when Finnegan had disappeared for a few weeks. But Patti's stories did not agree with Finnegan's as to their early life.

"Finnegan said that, Dotty? I wonder why he said a thing like that? Papa was never anything but a dock worker and a hell of a poor one. I don't know why mama ever married the bum. He was so damned antediluvian that it was embarrassing. I mean the word literally; he was from before the beginning. Finnegan looks that way a little. I guess I do too. An important man called papa 'The Monster Forgotten' once. I don't know why."

"Then Finnegan never went to Italy to art school?"

"If he wants to say he did, then let him say it. But last year is the only time he was ever over there, and only for two days between ships then. He wrote me from Napoli; he was kind of sloppy about it. I don't know why he wants to hark back to the old country; we're not any part of it."

"And he never took art lessons from Van Ghi?"

"There isn't any Van Ghi. He's just a name that Finn made up. Finn could always draw. But the only lessons he ever had were from the sisters in grade school and the drunken painters in Pirates' Alley."

And once Patricia said something else to her:

"I never really knew him, Dot. He is my brother and only a year younger, and he was with me more than anyone else. I sort of raised

him, but we were always strangers. It's as though he were a changeling."

And another time Patricia told her:

"If you ever hear anything bad about him, don't believe it, Dotty, not even if he tells it to you himself. He is incapable of doing anything bad; but the appearances sure do stack up high against him sometimes."

"I know," said Dotty.

From this it would seem that all the early stories of Finnegan are suspect. Dotty never asked Patrish about the other stories; nor could she figure why this so friendly boy was so solitary. He worked most of the time. He shipped out. He also rode the river. He was very fond of Dotty. He gave her his money to keep and never asked an accounting. They had fun. He knew everyone in the Quarter. He always talked of being raised in the heart of the Quarter, but Patti said they were from Irish Channel.

Was he a phoney? Of course not. It is the meticulous people who are the phonies. They restrict events. They nail down things with place and date, not knowing that this is a false way to handle things, that most of them should be taken on the fly.

Was he a liar? Oh, a little bit, a little bit. The feeling against liars is a modern thing and it won't last. He was the real thing. He fancied himself an expert. And he did have taste. Dotty could now perceive that the signed pictures by Van Ghi which he possessed were by his own hand, but she did not argue with his thesis that this was the greatest of the traditionalist-modernist-experimentalists. Who could tell? They were good pictures and Dotty liked to have them hanging around the room.

Finnegan was a faithful correspondent while he was in the army. He wrote to Dotty four times a year: for Christmas, for her birthday, and twice more yearly. She appreciated this. She knew he wouldn't do it for anyone else in the world.

But when he came back she realized that there was no permanency in this. She enjoyed the week in St. Louis and the introduction to the mystic order of the Dirty Five. At home she became a dedicated worker in a journalistic enterprise that would fill the rest of her life. To some it seemed that she served a fetish; to her it was the Greatest Thing.

But Finnegan said there were simultaneous worlds and simultaneous people and that the world she was in was not coincident to his. Well, it did seem Finnegan could never have valid connections with a woman of this world, not with her at least.

And he had flown the coop and left her with a last sorrow that could not be forgotten, that must be lived with. He followed a

compulsion to seek and not to find.

"You leave me for Creusa, and she is fantasy," Dotty said once, "she bursts into flames." And another time she said "Oh Finnegan, and you were also in Arcadia! *Santa Maria*, why can't we all be in Arcadia?"

2.

There is nothing finer than to sleep outdoors on a summer night on perhaps a fragrant haystack. Was this a haystack? It felt hard and grainy, almost like a brush pile. No matter. Small animals were playing about. What small animals would be frisking about the countryside on an early morning? Chipmunks? Rabbits? Squirrels? They had an odd smell.

There is only one thing that smells like that and it is the rat. Odd that there should be rats running around here in the pre-dawn. Finnegan stretched luxuriously and dozed again. But while he slept, he also thought. His sore little head was starting to work. The overly sweet smell was not just stagnant water and rank weeds: it was the smell of dried blood. Someone around here was bloody and nobody else was here. Finnegan watched the stars fade till even the brightest was gone. Then he sat up.

He was in the middle of a very foul dump. There were indeed rats running around, and the dried blood was his own. The bloom was off the morning now. There is a terrible depression that comes on waking like this with no memory of the last hours of the day before.

This is to be Odysseus, to wake up every morning shipwrecked on a strange shore. Shipwrecked and shoeless: for a long time Finnegan had suspected that he had no shoes on. Now he looked and it was so. And his hair was full of blood.

An inventory showed things to be in better shape than could have been suspected. His shoes were in the mud not ten yards away, where he had walked out of them. They were sunken in the mud, but that was no problem. He had not been roiled. He had three dollars left. There was an inch of Old Crow remaining in a bottle. He drank it and began to clean himself in the stagnant water.

This was the beginning of another day in the life of Ulysses.

3.

Now it was early afternoon and he was walking north through rolling meadows. It could have been the same day, but likely it was several days later. He was not wearing his own clothes. He was wearing a shabby outfit too large for him, but it was fairly clean. He was walking with a boy named Howland who was carrying a rabbit he had killed.

They waded a few brooks or creeks that were flowing west or southwest. The only roads they crossed were country roads. Towards

dusk, Howland had caught a second rabbit. They stopped in the bend of a creek and made a pit fire to cook them. Then they put a couple of lines into the water. After they had eaten, they lay down for the night and talked.

"Is Howland your first name or last?" Finnegan asked him.

"That's a lot of names."

"My father believed in giving us names from the old families. I don't know why, because he hated them. I guess he did it to irritate them by having us called by their names. What's your name?"

"Finnegan O'Hannigan McGillicuddy."

"That sounds like a phonier name than mine. Is that really your name?"

"No. Most of it I just made up. But everybody calls me Finnegan."

The next day they made possibly twenty miles; they ate a few milky ears of corn that they picked as they went along, and some small potatoes. They stayed in an old barn that was no longer used. Neither of them had any money left, so the next morning Finnegan went to find a town and get some work. Howland wanted to stay where he was. Finnegan came back every night for three nights. On the fourth morning they started north again, and Finnegan had fifteen dollars which he split with Howland.

They were going to Chicago. Finnegan in the unknown past had promised to take Howland to Chicago. He didn't know where they were, and he recalled with sudden amusement that he had worked in a town for three days and hadn't found out the name of it.

Howland had a jingle that he chanted one night as they lay up in a hay loft. It was to a hoe-down sort of tune:

"Five little gophers, slick and bright as sin.

Farmer plowed their house up, house fell in.

"One found a house where he ate and drank.

Rich and fine by a river bank.

"One built a mansion high a-top a hill.

No one ever plowed it up, no one ever will.

"One found a sly house, dry and safe to perch.

One found a fine house underneath a Church.

"Four little gophers, fat and fine n'all.

The other little gopher di'nt find no house at all."

Finnegan was weary of the travel which he knew would never end. And he was lonesome for things he was sure he would never have. That may have been why he wept in the dark.

The creeks were running north now. The travelers stayed one night in sight of a great river and a town across from it. The next morning they went over. The town was Metropolis and they were in Illinois. Finnegan had suspected for a long time that they were easy of the Mississippi.

Finnegan had a bottle. Howland did not drink. They sang a lot as

they walked, and were very happy. Howland in particular had become jubilant. They both worked three days in a little town and got money ahead. They bought food in the grocery stores now and cooked it in the fields. Sometimes they ate at coffee shops and roadside cafés. Never before would Howland go into these places with Finnegan.

Finnegan had been spending several hours a day teaching Howland to read better. He had been to school only a couple of years and not learned much. Finnegan would read the funny papers to him as they looked at them together. Then he made Howland read them back to him. Howland couldn't write much, but Finnegan taught him to print and he made progress.

Howland didn't know the address of anyone in Chicago. He didn't know what Chicago was like, but that was where he wanted to go. They worked in quite a few Illinois towns. Several times they ran into sharp remarks when they registered together at hotels. In this, Noble was not noble, and Urban was not urbane, nor was St. Joseph saintly. This was not the South, but neither was it all harmony. They stopped a week in Blue Island before they went into Chicago. Howland didn't know what he wanted to do.

"I want to make a lot of money. A colored boy hasn't much of a chance without money. I would have to be a singer, or a jazzman, or a prize fighter, or a basketball player, or baseball or football. That's the only things I can make any money at."

Howland was big and strong. Maybe someone could make a fighter out of him, but he wasn't one now. Finnegan could give him fifty pounds and punch him all over the pasture. But he was a terrific runner. Finn had seen him run down rabbits in the open. He had played neither football nor basketball in high school; he hadn't gone to high school. He couldn't read music, but he said that he could tootle a horn. The odds were against his becoming a great jazzman.

Finnegan thought that he should go into either the army or navy (he was eighteen years old), serve a couple of years, and then try to get some benefits. Or just get a job, any job, and stay with it, not to want to change every two or three days.

"But that's what you do," Howland said.

"I know it, but I don't want you to be like me."

Finnegan had a dream one night before they reached Chicago. He had a lot of dreams now as his conscience was bothering him.

Well, Clio was there with trumpet and clepsydra. They were funny things to be carrying around, but she was a funny girl. There was Erato and Euterpe, in fact the whole blamed family of them. They tried to put a sort of stole around Finn's shoulders, and also something on his head.

"Go away, girls, you bug me," he told them, but he couldn't wake

up from them.

"We know," they said.

They never did really get it on him, but they had it sort of draped over one shoulder before he managed to wake up from them. It burned like fire.

In Chicago, Finnegan had two or three dates with a pretty, dark girl he met in a bar. Her name was Francine. Then he introduced Howland to her. She thought that she could get him on as a kitchen boy in the hotel where she worked. It might take a couple of days. He would have to wait till one of the boys got drunk and didn't show up. Then she would throw a little gasoline on the fire of the employer's wrath and get him canned. If Howland turned out to be a steady boy he could stay as long as he wanted. And when he learned the business he could get a job as waiter in a supper club and make good money.

"Finnegan, I like that boy," she said. "I'll get him situated and see if I can get him to stay with it. He's not spoiled a bit, and he's sweet. If it looks like I can raise him the way I want to I'll marry him."

While they waited for one of the kitchen boys to get canned, Finnegan decided to take Howland and pay a visit to Casey. Finnegan had money now, or at least someone had money. It may have been Francine's money. The three of them were very close at that time and they always remained so. In latter years, Finnegan often lived with the Howlands when he was in Chicago.

Howland had turned out to be a comedian, so they made the visit up good. Finn had a new 1946 model sport coat and it didn't take much to make a flash out of him. He got a pair of canary-colored gloves and a swagger stick for Howland.

He told Casey that Howland was his valet. Howland's job, he told Casey, was to carry his bottle. Finnegan would slump deep in an easy chair and spin a long series of lies to Casey. Then he would raise one finger. Howland would take a bottle out of a hamper, uncork it elaborately, and hand it to Finnegan. Finn would take a swig and hand it back. It would be corked and hampered again with ceremony.

Finnegan was in very good form, and when he was in good form he couldn't be topped. He told a number of high stories. Most of them hadn't happened; some of them couldn't possibly happen. But others of them, which hadn't happened, were to happen in the future. Finnegan often went to great lengths to make happen the stories which he had told for truth. Casey had always been his best audience for the reason that he enjoyed the stories and didn't care whether they were true or not.

But, to come down to earth, what did he do for a living?

Finnegan talked of the art dealers who were after him for pictures. Casey was puzzled. He knew that Finnegan was good, but he also

knew that he was averse to working at what he did best. Well as he knew Finn, still there was the chance that he had caught on somehow and was in the money. And, if he had, then what more natural than that he should have a valet just to take care of his bottles?

They both stayed with Casey for four days, good days. Casey had nearly gotten out of the habit of having real fun, but he still liked to get back to it.

Then Francine came for Howland to go work. As she left, she called that she would have the agency try to get Finn another valet but that good ones were hard to find.

4.

He worked a little, but not in full seriousness at his art. He had not forgotten how the stole burned when it was draped over his shoulder. But there is nothing to prevent a great artist from doing novelty work for money, not if he does it well.

Finnegan carved four life-size cigar store Indians. They were authentic and at the same time humorous, with just the right touch of burlesque in them. He disposed of them for a hundred dollars each to a certain rich man. These were great bargains at the price. Nobody could carve a cigar store Indian like Finnegan.

Hillary Hilton ended up with one of them years later. He keeps it for the love he bore Finnegan. Money couldn't buy it from him, and he is the man who would sell anything. If you know him well enough you can see it at his place. It is not known what happened to the other three. And Finnegan wasn't a man to do very many of anything.

Casey had money. He had always liked money more than the rest of them. It was Legitimate. He was given opportunities to make money by those who thought as he did. He talked to Finnegan a little about money. He could get Finnegan into the money too.

If you have talent, you market it. If you are right, then a market will be found for you, not necessarily the public market. As a drunken New Orleans painter Finnegan would get nowhere. Drunken painters are in great supply and they all come from New Orleans. But let him get himself sponsored as the pet of this particular set of liberals and he was in. With party sanction, he would get commissions running into many thousands of dollars. He could work on murals in any of the new Federal Buildings. This was the best. If one was right, it did not even take ability, though it was fortunate that Finnegan had this.

Or really he need not paint at all. They would just give him the name of being a great proletarian painter. Then he could spend the rest of his life making cocktail parties and being house guest of all the well-heeled heels. His only duties would be to sign a manifesto now and then.

This is actually what the Life of Riley consists of: of living with the

best, of being fêted, of hearing the bright wits crackle and seeing them spark; of turning the phrase that people in Pasadena and Passaic would think was their own three months from now; of having one's choice of various sets of liberal morals and even being able to improvise one's own and have them imitated. And ultimately the bill to be paid by either the government or the foundations.

Why, Finnegan would be a natural here. People liked him, and he had always gotten along. He could be a Bohemian with the Bohemians and a toper with the toppers. And the thing to remember was that these were the people who counted. They were the real people; all the others were imitations.

The way to get along was to figure which way the world was going, and to be waiting for it when it got there. Then you would have the cream. And these people knew which way the world was going. It was going their way.

"But are these people not, pardon the word Casey, rats?" Finnegan asked.

"Yes, from one point of view. Wolverines is a better word. They are full-sized slashers. They are bigger than rats and rougher. They are wolves from your viewpoint, and you are sheep from theirs. But animal comparisons will not get it. The world is going their way; it isn't going yours. You will have to join them, the sooner the better."

"Hell, Casey, they haven't a Chinaman's chance."

"The Chinaman at least hasn't a chance, only a couple of years. And the States can't outlast China by thirty years. This figure is given by those on both sides. Remember that: it is the outside figure. We'll be middle-aged, even a little old then, Finn. We can't afford to be on the wrong side of the balance. It's no time of life to be a martyr when you're past fifty. Believe me, it means a lot if you get right early."

"Casey, I wouldn't say it if we hadn't both always known it, but you were the soft-headed one of the crowd."

"I was *not* the soft-headed one. I resent that. And partly because I resent it I have turned the way I have. Listen Finn, the weather bureau, some bureau anyhow, sends up balloons to see which way the wind is blowing. We send up balloons too, and we get a lot of information from them. We are making progress month by month. Once they shot our balloons down right away. Now they drift over low and easy, and the gentry rush out to paste testimonials on their sides as they pass.

"The Balloon analogy is getting out of hand. It's more like an echo cave. Here is the idea. There is a phrase among the initiates: The Baby has to have a Name. Suppose that something very raw is planned or pulled: the phrase-makers go to work. No matter how red the baby is when it's born, still it has to have a name. This naming is considered

strictly as a work of art by those who do it. There is at first no expectation of acceptance.

"But, to give it a little semblance of substance, several echoes are set up to go off according to a timetable. If the Baby gets its name in the Worker, then there will be christening parties in a few of the sheets, all in the family, of course.

"But an odd thing began to happen. The acoustics in this cave were far better than anyone had dared hope. There was always a long series of echoes from sources apparently not in on the prompting. They came from the literate and the arty, from the professorate and the clergy. They came from a great physicist and from a trenchant wit, from a noted widow, from a famous educator, from an elder statesman, and from a chocolate soldier.

"It is weird when, for instance, I myself do the naming in the least of the sheets, the *Crock*, to see how it is picked up and echoed by these great persons just as though it had meaning; but I did not give it any meaning."

"Do all these belong to yours then?"

"Not in the same sense or on the same level that I do. This thing is complex. But they follow the timetable perfectly, and they are played by the same keyboard. They are with us to the bottom of their souls; and they never gag, even when we are repelled ourselves."

"Wouldn't it, pardon the word Casey, be more manly to face them out even if (and I think it is not the case) the odds were in their favor?"

"No it wouldn't. And the word 'manly' is used only by boys; and you are still a boy, Finn. The point that you cannot get straight is that I believe in this. You all say, and you have it from Duffey, that nobody able to dress himself without help or to count to ten without prompting could really believe this. That's wrong. If you have lost the One Thing, and you have even a trace of logic (and I do have a trace) then there is nothing left but the Other Thing. Believe me, there is no middle ground and there should not be. It is so simple, and you make it complex."

"It is so complex and you try to make it sound simple. But we cannot agree."

They could not. So, after spending several days more in each other's company and on the town, they separated. But not before they had a couple of real rousers for old time's sake.

Then Finnegan gathered his gear and left town.

5.

And Hans had discovered a certain savor gone.

Vincent had a vague feeling of something amiss, but it was not so strong with him: he had Teresa who was of much the same savor.

Henry attributed his incomplete feelings to the fallen nature of man. There was a more salient detail, he knew, but he couldn't put his finger on it.

Finnegan had been the salt of their lives, and now he had gone out of them.

Was Finnegan a simple schizo in his living several lives? No. He was a complex schizo. His travels ended only with his life, though X (who claimed to have later congress with him) said they did not end even then. The apocryphal of the Finnegan adventures cannot be separated from the canonical. They raise the question: are there simultaneous worlds and simultaneous people?

Anything that Finnegan told of his travels, inside or outside of the States, is suspect. His friends know most of the stories, but they do not always know the same stories in the same versions. Only Show Boat understood what Finnegan meant when he said that he was of a different recension than strictly human. And what was she?

The bloody idyll of Anastasia was also told by Mr. X. It had a certain Grecian magic; but both X and Finnegan were liars and the effect may have been cumulative.

There are improbabilities in the account of Saxon X. Seaworthy who swore that he would have Finnegan killed. And a certain ship on which a weird voyage is said to have been made is not to be found in any registry. X said that the ship that Finnegan sailed on was the ship named *Delay*, or *World*, or *Argo*. He said that most of the details of the voyage as told by Finnegan were imagined by Finnegan.

Finnegan did have a fetch or double named Doppio de Pinne, Dopey the Seaman. But which one of them did Papa Devil kill in the cabin of the *Brunhilde* without leaving a body?

Finnegan *did* make a deal in diamonds with Joseph the Hausa boy in Sierra Leone. He *did* know Papadiabolous alive, after he had helped bury him dead. He did drink brandy in style on the Grand Canary, and he learned about mermaids from one of them. He knew the Golden Ogress and other archetypes. He touched eternity at Naxos. And he buried Don Lewis in the sand near Tangier.

He was party, with Le Marin and Don Barnaby and Johnny Duckwalk, in a society that was the dark counterpart of the Dirty Five, that went further and did worse.

He did know the exact location of the Terrestrial Paradise. And he did know in what grave the Devil himself was buried.

Finnegan once stole the most valuable suitcase in the world.

He knew Angela Cosquin, and he knew about two sunken ships.

He was onto the secret of two men buried in one grave. But, since this was also known by Mr. X, it may not longer be a secret.

In the transmarine adventures of Finnegan there is wild stuff. It

cannot safely be given here.

This was in Buffalo and Finnegan was a door-to-door salesman. He was selling one of the finest developments of modern science, selling it for two dollars a bottle, and his profit was seventy-five cents.

Finnegan went to Manhattan with McGregor. McGregor was soon back to his normal weight and was sleeping again. Finnegan and the dog decided to put on the dog. They took up lodgings at the Waldorf. They became night-clubbers and first-nighters. They were seen around. That was the first step: to be seen around.

Except for two things that happened the same day, Finnegan would still be reigning as the painter Van Ghi, and still adding color to and taking it from the narrow chameleon Island of Manhattan. These were two things that deeply shocked the moral character of Finnegan. Van Ghi as devised and constituted had no moral character, but this hit the man underneath, and Finnegan was the man underneath.

There are wild stretches of New Jersey. There are bogs and bog-men. There are Barrens; there are low mountains and high seas; there are hard sands and soft rocks.

After Finnegan had left the goat-people he traveled for many days without finding harbor. In later memories it seemed that it had always been foggy that summer. This may or may not have been a physical aspect. Finnegan walked mostly in the three or four hours before dawn and lay up when the sun rose. He traveled much towards the West.

At the same time that some of this was happening, Finnegan was spending twelve years in happy marriage to Teresa Piccone.

Chapter Eight

Land of the Cyclops

1.

The name of the product is a secret. Its purpose was to housebreak dogs. One whiff and the response was instantaneous. It worked.

But Finnegan wasn't selling very many: two or three a day, barely enough to keep body and soul together. Most of the customers were housewives; and when Finnegan whistled up his shill to give a demonstration he was always overcome with shame.

And then a dog is only flesh and blood. Finnegan and McGregor the dog gave about fifteen demonstrations an hour which is around a hundred and twenty a day. McGregor lost weight and could not sleep at night.

And the take was not large, two dollars and a quarter a day if they made three sales, and that was a good day; and it to be divided between man and dog. Finnegan's first attempt at a white collar job, that of commission salesman, was not too successful. Besides the indelicacy of the product, there were the sore feet and frequent hunger.

But Finn had the qualities of perseverance and adaptability and imagination; the qualities, as the boss salesman had said, that had made America great. Possibly this called for a new marketing technique. It certainly did not call for surrender.

The answer came to Finnegan in a blinding flash. For several evenings in his droll way he had been playing with the stuff in bars. He would carelessly dribble a few drops into the cuffs of a neighbor's trousers. Then he would just as carelessly go to the door and whistle in McGregor and his friends. This usually caused a near-riot. The man would just plain go crazy with the suddenness and magnitude of the attack. You have to hear how one of those men hollers and carries on; there is no believing it otherwise.

This ended in the banishment of Finnegan and McGregor from many of the taverns, but it did endear him to the confraternity of the ribbers.

Now the sudden idea that came to Finnegan was this: sell the product to the ribbers. Do not sell it to the housewife. It should be in the possession of every practical joker.

There were four basic formulae from which an infinitude of jokes, stunts, and sensations could be devised. There was the hotel-lobby or plush-joint ploy. There was the smart-shop counter display sensation. There was the park-bench sleeper device; and its variant, the bus-waiter trap. And there was the under-table-crawl which threatened to become the successor to the hot foot.

From these basic maneuvers, the ribbers themselves took off with a

display of inventiveness and variety that startled. Adaptability and imagination are the qualities of the jokers, even more than the rest of Americans.

We urge you to get a bottle and use it today. The free play of your imagination should lead to the howling results that are so good for the soul. You may have an undeveloped genius for this sort of thing.

A city ordinance has since been passed outlawing the use of the product for any other purpose than that for which it was originally intended. Buffalo, New York is the only city in the country that has such an ordinance and it is worded so oddly that the uninitiate would be puzzled as to what it might refer. It refers to the product which Finnegan sold which had such a rapid and direct effect upon dogs.

Finnegan sold three thousand bottles in one week. Then he retired from the business. He had proved his point: that perseverance brings success to even the most humble endeavor, and that a little imagination can bring dignity to the marketing of even the most indelicate product.

From Buffalo, Finnegan carried away two thousand dollars and the undying memory of hilarious episodes and droll gentlemen and ladies and the curious capers that could still be enjoyed after the money was spent. And thereafter, for the rest of his life, Finnegan always carried a bottle of the stuff: but he never used it for profit; only for fun.

2.

Then Finnegan had cards printed up making himself to be Gregory Van Ghi. He rented a studio in the Village and began to grind out masterpieces in what he believed to be his third or orange period.

This was not his best work. His best work, by his very nature, would always remain undone. And the Orange Period of no artist is his best period. Yet these paintings by Finnegan were quite the best things being done in America at that time. This is on the opinion of those who know.

Finnegan rented a showroom uptown and became a one-man show. He had his barfly and showgirl acquaintances come in to give a semblance of a crowd, and he instructed them in arty remarks to drop. And Gregory Van Ghi was a success. He sold all the Orange Period paintings that he could turn out. When the showing was finished, he received a standing commission from a reputable dealer for all that he could paint.

Then Finnegan Van Ghi devised a set of eccentricities to draw attention to himself. He found a favorite lady taxi-driver who carried him piggyback every morning from his hotel lobby out to her taxi. People notice things like that.

He delivered lectures on Balance and Arrangement while standing

on the shoulders of a showgirl friend. The added altitude gave him finer perspective, he said.

And he replaced the boa constrictor as shoulder-piece for the magnificent and hilarious dowager Nada Patkaniowska. Nada was beautiful, all six foot two inches and all three hundred pounds of her. She had an incredible amount of golden hair, and she liked to be escorted by Finnegan Van Ghi. She had been accustomed to making imposing entrances with the boa constrictor around her shoulders. Now she made really striking entrances with the painter Van Ghi sitting on her right shoulder in the crescent of her fine raised arm.

Finnegan was not a drunk now. He was a personality. He met a higher class of liars than he had previously known and he found himself extended to keep up with them.

3.

The first thing happened when Finnegan was dressing that morning. He noted that he was getting fat. He had always been lean as a rail, but now the rail had a protuberance on it. This shocked Finnegan and determined him to go on the road again and regain his lost moral character.

"I should have suspected it," he said to himself. "Mrs. Patkaniowski breathes a little heavier after she has swept up a flight of stairs with me on her shoulder lately. She is Brunhilde, the Northern Valkyrie (*in forma rotunda et globosa*). I voyaged on her when she was the Ship: but is she also the Argo?"

The second thing happened that afternoon. Finnegan was to paint the portrait of the wife of Putiphar. Putiphar was named Adrian Shapiro and his wife was Mercedes. These people were wealthy and known, and this could have been the beginning of a fine portraitist career. Shapiro was not prince of the armies of Egypt; and yet he was a more important man than the first Putiphar and he moved in higher circles.

To be a great portraitist requires more than genius. Finnegan had that. But it also requires that the subjects of the portraits have something very near to genius. This requirement would be fulfilled. The Shapiros were extraordinary, and their circle was a dazzling one.

But Mercedes was playful. And Finnegan would still be Joseph, albeit a goatish one. He took his coat, but he left his paints of many colors when he left with an outcry behind him. He knew he wouldn't be thrown into a dungeon, but he would be the goat of the stories. He really wanted an excuse to skip. He had been at one thing long enough.

He made only the necessary close-out call at the bank, and then taxied over to the Jersey Shore. He bought a half-dozen socks and a little hand grip, and set out on the road. He'd been lonesome for the

road. The weather was nice, and probably it was summer by that time.

He regretted only that he had not stopped to pick up McGregor. But McGregor was a smart dog and would make his way in the world. And besides he, like Finnegan, had begun to get fat. It was time he was on his own again.

4.

There are hillbillies more remote than any in Tennessee or Arkansas. And when one is afoot, those stretches are disproportionately long.

It was in this back country that Finnegan met the goat-man. Sometimes he and his goats lived in a barn or a shack on the outskirts of a town. Often they were forced to move on by the populace. In winter he had to take them to a cave to live.

They had not an easy time of it. The goat-man carried a scythe that made him look like Father Time; but this was not for effect, it was an economic necessity. He would sweep the tall wild grass, and rake it into caves and cotes for the goats to eat. Otherwise they would have starved in winter.

We often think of Pan as a young man, or one in vigorous hairy middle age. So he was once. But nobody stays young forever. For twenty-odd centuries now his beard had been dirty-white and his hair gray and tangled. But he was not as dirty as he smelled. It was only that he used a soap which he made himself from goat's fat.

We do not mean to imply that the goat-man was actually Pan. That was just a light fancy that Finnegan developed after he had lived with him for a week. But he did look very like Pan looks today, now that he has grown old and tacky.

They met in this way. Finnegan encountered the seven youngest kids one afternoon, whose names, though he did not know them then, were Bownee, Luin, Mairt, Keadin, Ordin, Haoine, and Sahirn. That goat-man always gave hebdomadal names to his seven youngest kids from a fancy of his.

The seven were very close kindred, being three sets of twins and a singling from four young sisters, and all were bound by affection as well as consanguinity, by mutual devotion and admiration, by loyalty to a common ideal and dedication to its furtherance.

The common ideal was the climbing of the bole of an ancient and dishonored sycamore tree which lay over from its broken base into the arms of its fellows. The little kids would attack it with a run, a scamper, a lunge, and a leap, to lodge triumphant in the crotch of the old tree. Those who were already up would cry encouragement. Those still to go would whimper anticipation.

After considerable clamor of black hooves on white trunk, all were up except Luin or Monday: and she could not achieve it. Here it was

that Finnegan gained the friendship of the unholy seven when he gave the little goat a boost, and was thanked by all.

The goat-man came along and fell into conversation with Finnegan. He was a friendly old man. It had always been the world that was unfriendly. He was associated with about forty goats. It was not an association of equals; but the goats thought that it was, and he let them think so.

"Oh yes, I have to slaughter them," the goat-man said, "about ten of the older ones a year. There is no resentment on their part. I don't believe that the goats quite understand what death is, or what I am doing when I skin and dismember one of their fellows. They are interested, and they often watch. But they do not recognize either the purpose or the effect, nor do they properly perceive the origin of the goat meat that I eat. We are likely to overestimate the intelligence of goats. Though shrewd in particulars, they lack mental scope and the power of abstract thought."

The goats were bivouacked that week on a fine grassy spine in the middle of a swamp. The goat-man had a little tent set up, and he spread another pallet for Finnegan. As it was a small tent, only the seven smallest kids were allowed to sleep with them in it.

Finnegan was an old swamp rat and he soon caught a mixed string of fish, partly from the several intermingling streams and creeks, partly from the still pools, and some out of the grass roots themselves. The grass here looked solid but it was not so. It was tufted at the top, but the spaced clumps were growing out of eighteen inches of water.

And after dark, Finn took a spot lantern of the goat-man and speared a sackful of frogs. Meanwhile, the goat-man called up the goats in turn by name, and they came. He milked them into wooden buckets. He milked fourteen goats and he made lots of cheese. Then he set a low fire to burn all night.

"Not that I care for a campfire myself," he said, "but the goats enjoy it and are disappointed if I don't build it. This is one of the things that they cannot do for themselves and I must do for them."

They talked most of the night, for neither Finnegan nor the goat-man had any hours to be kept. The goat-man often lay up in the daytime and wandered at night. And Finnegan had the same habit.

The goat-man had come over from the South of France in 1908, bringing only six goats with him. They had been hooted out of New York City. Nobody would rent a room or flat to a man with goats, not even if they had money, and the goat-man did have it. Now those had been good goats and there was no reason for the fuss. A goat is entitled to enjoy a big city as much as anyone else. A goat likes a city; he is the most cosmopolitan of animals. He likes people and noise and lights.

The goats would have liked the theaters and restaurants. But only a few of the more dingy places had even admitted them; and after a week, the seven little aliens were told firmly that they had to leave town. They've never been back.

In forty years they had roamed most of the Atlantic states, but now they stayed in Jersey the year around and holed up as best they could in the winter. The goats remained as young and spry as ever, renewing themselves from generation to generation. But there was no way for the goat-man to be renewed. He did not travel as well as once he did.

He had a name indeed. It was Gautier. But the yokels pronounced it Goat-Ear in derision of the goat-life he led and the undeniable fact that he did have hairy ears. He did not like to be called Goat-Ear; he would rather be just the goat-man.

He was not destitute. He was a one-man Gypsy cap. He had three carts or small wagons, each pulled by four strong goats. He had an assortment of tools, and a loom and a wheel. He was master of all crafts. He made nets and seines and lines and traps. He ate a pound of cheese a day, and made two pounds to barter.

He made berry jelly and berry wine, and corn beer, and potato whisky. He never bothered with bread, but he traded for wheat in hundred pound sacks. He boiled it and ate it like a cereal with milk and honey. He had a score of bee trees along his route that he tapped yearly.

He cut the goat meat into strips and dried it in the wind; then he chopped it up fine with melted fat and honey and poured it into jars or skin bags to carry. He gathered fox skins, for both he and the goats hated foxes. And once a year he killed a deer. And the goat-man, who was of old world stock, ate acorns, as did his goats.

Naturally the goat-man who was collateral with pan had a syrxin, or several of them. He would play those, and also the bagpipes. He was the source of much of the ghost music that came from the wasteland and the swamps.

He may even have been the ghost of the Harlow House.

This was an old and once fine house on an abandoned farm. The goat-man lived there often with his goats. But he knew of no ghost there except himself. He had heard that the house was haunted, of course, but he had never quite believed it. There were some indications of it, but nothing that you could put your two hands on.

Just as a pig can see the wind and a horse can see the thunder, so can a goat see ghosts. But a goat is not afraid of ghosts, and it is hard to tell when he really sees them. He will hop around and follow an unseen figure, just as he will a man; but it may be just an imaginary figure that he is playing with. Goats have a good imagination and they often play around imaginary figures. And they often play around

ghosts.

There were quite a few ghosts in the Barrens and in the brush, and most of the old shacks were haunted. But whether the Harlow House was haunted is not certain. The descriptions of the Harlow House are from the goat-man. Finnegan never saw the house himself, but he often thought that he might go back and visit it.

It had a very large cellar, and the house was built big to cover it. On the ground floor, everything that was not gone was broken. But the fireplace was still the finest place for a fire, and the goat-man had built many a one there, sometimes for weeks at a time. The dining room was the goats' room; it was understood that it belonged to them entirely. They would clatter up on the walnut sideboards and dance on the long sway-backed table that was broken in the middle.

The library was looted and forlorn, but some of the best of it remained. It had long ago been explained to the goats, and handed down by them from mother to son and daughter, that they could eat only hymn books, and devotional books, and novels of years of bad vintage, and collected speeches, and works of dead poetesses, and funeral orations, and autobiographies.

The goat in his own line is shrewd, and once he has a thing in his mind he never forgets it. A healthy weeding-out of the library had been going on for twenty years since they had begun to visit the house. Books otherwise indigestible were digested, and otherwise unnourishing had given nourishment.

And now there was left only a fascinating collection of Old American Blood and Thunder in paper and hard backs, Old Wild West, Train Robber, Buffalo Hunter and Indian Scalper, Bank Robber and Brigand, the blue-jowled romances that the old goat-man loved.

And there were the French books that he read out loud to the goats, to hear again the tongue of his young manhood at to let the goats hear the language of their ancestors. *Les Contes Drolatiques* was a favorite.

"It is a filthy book," the goat-man told Finnegan. "I really shouldn't read it to the young goats. And yet it's so damned Gothic, as it were. I ought to burn it. But the goats love it. There is something in Balzac that appeals to goats, and to the goat in man."

The younger kids could not understand Stendhall, and went to sleep listening. But the older and wiser ones were enchanted by the devious machinations of Gina Pietranera and her nephew Fabrizio, and Count Mosco, and all their mistresses and lovers.

Tartarin of Tarascon they loved, the incomparable Gil Blas, the compelling Count of Monte Cristo. These the goat-man read to his friends, these tales of the old country whence they had sprung. He read them on the winter nights while the wind moved like a wraith

through the windowless house. And when, one by one, the goats had all fallen asleep, he put away the French books and read to himself silently the Old American Blood and Thunder.

Finnegan essayed a joke about goats. "Did you ever hear about the Castrador-Capros?" he asked them and the goat-man. "He was a joker and a dancer. They called him that because he cut capers."

"No, I never heard of him," the goat-man said, and the goats hadn't either.

"That was a joke," Finn explained. "To cut capers means to dance and play tricks, *fare delle capriole*. And also *castrare becchi*."

"I understand what it means," the goat-man said. "It would be a better pun in the Old French. With you in Italian you have only *capra* a nanny, and *capro* is lost. In the Spanish they have yet *carbon* for the he-goat, and *capar* and *cabriolar* for the two goatish verbs. But you were going to tell a joke?"

"I have already done so."

"That little pun in goat Latin, that was a joke?"

But several older goats appreciated it, even if the goat-man did not.

The goat-man was a spoofer. He was also a little wild. It was all right for a week or two in the summertime, but Finnegan would not want to spend a winter with him in a cave or shack or haunted house. Some of the goats were a little apprehensive also.

Finnegan missed an opportunity here. The goat-man had offered to make him his heir. He would not live forever; he would not live much longer. Finnegan thought about it, and in many ways the life would have suited him. But he declined.

The goat-man was odd, no question of that. He was odd even to the goats. There was a clique among them who wanted to go with Finnegan when he left; but he explained to them that this was not possible. He did not quite know where he was going, and the life he led was no life for a goat. There would be mean people and mean dogs, and he would not always be able to protect them.

Finnegan had begun to talk to the goats when he was with them. It was a contagious habit and easily fallen into. He assumed that they understood him. Some of them did. Apathy and Hermione, and Cecille and Diocletian. These were the smartest of the goats. But Mephistopheles, who was the oldest of the goats, was not smart at all. The oldest male goat was always named Mephistopheles, and when he died or was killed his name was given to another. But the present leader was a dope and was not respected by the flock. His maiden name was Sciocco, and that is the kind of goat he was.

He had been on a riverboat for some days. And then he had been

put off in a very rough way, and had been told never to show again. This meant that he had been fired and it distressed him. Always he had worked well when he had a job; always he had quit, but he had never been fired. This meant that he was coming apart. He no longer had any control over himself, and he was sick. He went down the River on another boat, and he worked well and was kept on. Then he came to the River Itself and went down it.

He was in the city that is built like a wheel, the city where he had been born. But the great city went around like that wheel itself, and he was unable to control his wanderings or to find his friends or cronies. He was never sure whether he was dreaming or whether these things were happening now, or at some other time.

Sometimes he thought: "This isn't all happening now. This is a rhapsody. Part of it happened somewhere else and part of it hasn't happened yet. It is a compression. It is cubist, and I am not. Some of these bars are really in Chicago and some of them are in Cincinnati. There are Frisco bars here, and Chinatown. Some of these places I used to be in in Galveston, and some of them are places I haven't been in yet in Havana. This is a futuristic nightmare. There are weirdies all over the place. There used to be only a few dives like that. It isn't right that everybody should have funny-shaped heads; only a few of the people should have funny shaped heads."

It was a fevered dream full of spinning lights and bar-room gin, and the streets had caricatures of their former names. Some of the people seemed to be part animal, and Finnegan was lost in the quarter of his own town that he knew like the back of his hand.

It went around like a wheel for many hours, a day and a night at least. Never before had he known a whole town to spin like that. It flung him away and outward till he was walking down a road one bright noon, two hundred miles away, and with no idea how he had gotten there.

And as often as he turned back towards home, so did eventualities carry him away from it. Every day in his confusion he found new friends and drank with them, and every day he drifted further from his destination. It is very hard to make port when both the wind and the waves are against you. It is sometimes better to hove to in a nearer haven and wait for another season to brave it.

And, as he was swept too near the next big town, gravity caught him and pulled him into its vortex. He was in another complex of streets, newer, but in some respects more shabby; where they gave you serpents (they tasted like serpents) when you asked for fish, and barbecue on a bun when you asked for bread.

Finnegan was in Texas, the dread land of the Cyclops: a race of one-eyed or squint-eyed tall men. And he despaired of ever seeing

home or friends again.

6.

But there is no room for those twelve years in this framework. All the time is taken up elsewhere. And all the days of Teresa's life are otherwise accounted for, and never did she leave her husband in St. Louis.

All the days of Finnegan's life are *not* accounted for. There are several times a week, three weeks, even several months missing. But never twelve years.

There has to be some explanation for this, unless both Finnegan and Teresa had the power (not too unusual) of being two places at once. Several of the Saints had this power, and some of the Ecstatics. But nobody had it for twelve years, only for a half-dozen minutes in a lifetime.

Part of, not the answer, but the habitat of the answer, may be found in an interval of one hundred and five hours, or from about sundown of a Tuesday till early the next Sunday morning, which interval Finnegan spent in the chaparral in either Medina or Frio County, and probably northeast of the Frio branch. For Finnegan did not remember crossing the branch and, as it had water in it that summer, he would probably remember if he had crossed it.

This interval is only one point of contact with the problem. It is by no means the whole site of it.

Monday Finnegan had been in Uvalde, and Tuesday in Sabinal and D'Hannis and Hondo; and then in D'Hannis again looking for his outfit. But everyone told him that the old Moonlight Cavalry had not been there for seven or eight years, and that none of the boys had ever been back. Only a few of the people there remembered him. But some of the boys still lived in San Antonio, they told him, and he should go there and find them and be taken care of.

Finnegan had been on maneuvers in this neighborhood years before, in his early army days.

So, when they would no longer serve him in the bars, he set out on foot with a shoulder-bag that had in it some Southern Comfort, some Old Crow, a little Hiram Walker, some of his richer brother Johnny, a bottle of Ron Rico and one of Don Q, and three of four each of Virginia Dare White and Red. It was a heavy bag and he clanked when he walked.

But he did not go East to catch a ride to San Antonio. Instead, he went South on a little road that he remembered. Nobody came along, and he walked the eight miles till the road turned off and left him. Then he continued on for two miles to a sort of clearing in the brush, and lay down on the ground with a stone for a pillow, and comforted himself with Southern Comfort. For now it was evening, the Tuesday

evening when the sequence begins.

The next one hundred and five hours, until Ramires and Elena Musquiz (who oddly remembered him after seven years) picked him up in their cart on the way to Mass in D'Hannis, these one hundred and five hours cannot now be reconstructed. For they include dream-sequences and noon-day devils, and parts of twelve years from another life.

Finnegan knew the street and the block and the number of the house, but he never went there in later years, or ever. It would have been too weird. It would have frightened him senseless if he had found it as he knew it must be. It would have frightened him still more if he had not so found it. And, though he was several times in that town, he would not go to that quarter.

And yet he lived in that house with Teresa his wife for twelve years, which was until death. And whichever of them died so early he did not know, nor if it was both of them. For this was all of what might have been, of what was in the other life (the perhaps valid life) that it was ever given him to see.

In the other life, the one that is sometimes called the mundane life, the life outside the hundred and five hours and outside of the twelve years (it cannot be called the real life: it cannot be known for sure which was real), in the other life, Teresa also was aware of the sequence.

For Chiara and for Raffaello and for Teresa Anna she had masses said, and this puzzled her husband Vincent. "Are you having masses said for yourself before you are dead?" he asked. "And who are the other two?"

"I have always answered you everything, and I do not know how to answer this," she said. "Maybe I am a little dead. But this Teresa Anna is not myself but is a daughter to me, and these others also are my children. And if this is a dream I do not know, or if it is a dream that we are in now. And you are my husband and can always ask me anything, but of this I do not know the answer."

Teresa asked Father McGuigan if she could have masses said for the three children who perhaps had never lived at all, who might be a dream. And yet, if one were not afraid to go and look, she knew the parish church where she had had them baptized, and she could see the register before her.

Father let her have the masses said though he didn't know what she meant, and he had known her every day of her life.

These were the children of Teresa and Finnegan.

At this time Teresa already had children by her husband Vincent, but they were not Chiara or Raffaello or Teresa Anna.

This was as near a perfect love as can be imagined on earth. Every

day was as though they had just met. And even if death did end it, it seemed in a way a happy death. There had been an intensity of living in literally millions of details and an affection that held a place for every one of them. There had been grace and pleasure and fun.

Even the old oil cloth on the kitchen table in the house where he lived with Teresa? Even the rotted back step. *Gesu Maria!* The homework of the kids from school! Evening and night and morning in the house! The broken davenport that they made down into a bed when the cousins came. *Santo Spirito!*—the way Teresa made bread with her hands. The smell of the bedroom, and the little chipped holy water font on the wall. Who else ever came home to such a house at night?

The twelve years had been all of richness and beauty (though perhaps of material poverty, for it was a poor street and a poor house), and God could be thanked for them, wherever and whatever they were.

The hundred and five hours, however, were not a happy time. Finnegan was sick and delirious. He suffered much in the daytimes, though he always found some low shade.

There were the rattlesnakes that came whenever he walked, and perhaps he saw more of them than there really were. At times they had him circled in great numbers. He may have come on the old ancestral city of the rattlesnakes, for he had been told of such.

And the noon-day devils were often there in the heat, and this was mostly after the Southern Comfort and the Old Crow were all gone.

And one of them said: '*Dic ut lapides isti panes fiant.*'

And then one said: '*Tauta pan ta soi doso,*' for the devils have a little Latin and much Greek. But Finnegan was never fooled by them, for he knew that these stones were only stones and that he could not make them break; and that all the kingdom they were offering him was a cactus kingdom which he already possessed for as long as he wished.

It was not that full clarity came to Finnegan. He knew that he was the only person in the world; he knew that he had always been the only person. This certainty and centrality was never to leave Finnegan in all his life, or after. It is good to have it solved.

On the day after Finnegan had been in the ancestral city of the rattlesnakes he was in the ancestral city of the buffalo. This, it is believed, was over the line in Frio County, within and just above the fork of the two creeks, for there is no record of any ancestral city of the buffalo in Medina County.

The smell of buffalo differs from that of cattle; though Finnegan had never encountered it before, he would always remember it. There was fresh dung and it was real. A man is a fool if he cannot tell

whether that is real. He should never be too far gone to tell.

The buffalo did not seem aware of his presence. They looked right through him, and he could also look through them. A peculiarity of vision had now developed from his drinking and from the stage of his life-travel. He could look right through many objects and at the daylight behind.

The buffalo has many aspects, and seems wedge-shaped and hulking and slanted from any point of view. From the front it looks a little like a giant barn owl.

"I mean," said Finnegan carefully, "the *Strix Pythaulus*. Not, of course, the *Strix Maximus*." Then he had to chuckle to himself for his exactitude. There was nobody there that he had to explain to what kind of an owl the buffalo reminded him of from the front.

Mostly these were old bulls. For it was high summer, and the rest of the herd had drifted hundreds of miles to the North, leaving only these sore-footed old codgers behind to guard their Capital.

The next day was Saturday, and there was nothing left but a little rum and the wine. Bandits had stolen one bottle of rum while Finnegan slept. At least there was no other explanation, unless one were to believe that the buffalo had stolen it.

And he slept within the circle of the buffalo that night, and possibly he is the only man ever to have done so. Finnegan was in accord with these buffalo, who are vestige, and who are older than any cattle of the earth. It was just as Finnegan himself was of a strain that is older than the proper people of the earth. He was in accord with them, but he very nearly died in that state of accord.

Very early on Sunday morning, Elena Musquiz saw him in the scrub brush and picked him up and carried him to the car. He would have been dead after another day in that rough country there. She and her husband took him into D'Hannis with them.

The sequence had ended. And time resumed its normal rounds.

No, no, that is wrong! It was reality that had ended. And the token world intruded once more.

Hans would seem to be the most open man in the world, and he was. Yet there was hardly anyone who really knew anything about him. Marie should have; after all, she married him. But Marie lived oddly in the present and in the future. She had no curiosity at all about the past.

In Wisconsin Rapids they met the Carnival. Now there are some who might think that the smartest man in the world would be doing something better than running a carnival: but these are mostly small-minded stylized people who have neither run a carnival nor been the smartest man in the world. Should he be a ruler of countries or a general of armies? There are drawbacks to those jobs, for paradoxically they are the most limiting. No, all the other worthy occupations are either exposed to the contaminatory theory of diseases of power or money or intellectual pride; or they involve too large a clutter of retainers, or doom one to a sessile life and too avid an attachment to the furniture of the world.

Hans was with the carnival for five or six years. This is where he grew up, and where he developed the conviction (not entirely false) that he could do anything in the world.

“He sang the grand old ballads of the people, accompanying himself on the flute.”

The beach was rough and cut up by canyons and ditches running inland. It was narrow and pounded by an unusually heavy surf. And this was the graveyard of the old trees; this was the driftwood shore to which Trinali always came. Francis Schraffenberger was with them, as well as Fitzjames and Adam Scanlon. This latter, who was possibly as good as Da Vinci, had set up his things and was painting a seascape with a High Renaissance sky over it. Like Da Vinci, Adam Scanlon worked best with an audience to talk to.

Back in town the Bohemes went to Lupido's. There they joined Endymeon Ellenbogen. Endymeon, like the rest of them, was a genius.

Trinali died young as she had wished. She died of dye poisoning. She had died a bunch of corks a luminescent lilac. It was this, either because she never washed her dishpan; or, as Adam Scanlon said, she tried some of the lilac coloring in a glass of wine, that had killed her.

There is no telling how long Hans lived in Bohemia, but it was probably only that Spring and Summer. After this there comes the mystery: the hidden years of his life. Everyone is entitled to a little mystery. There is a gap here of either four or five or six years depending upon which recension you follow.

Chapter Nine

Hans, Who Is Also Orpheus

1.

Finnegan spent a week with Hans in a shack on a construction job, probably in the summer of 1950. Hans, in his occupation as a building contractor, was the only one of the Five who ever changed the face of the world literally. He altered quite a few acres that summer.

In the off hours of that week he talked a lot with Finnegan; his early life is here mostly built out of pieces of those talks. But nothing that Hans said ever had to be taken with a grain of salt. Many of the things here are of more moment than he made them.

John Gottfried Schultz was born on January 2, 1915 at St. Gallen, Wisconsin, the only child of John William Schultz and Mary Irene Hayden.

This was in the Northern Wilderness, in the lake country beyond Rhinelander and not far from Eagle River. But it was not in the dark north. The memories of John (who was not Hans at home or anywhere till he was half-grown) were always of a town and country of splendid sunlight. John was born warm. And when he later remembered St. Gallen, it was always as the land of the larger summer.

The father of John had him educated intensively in the Three Parts of Man. German and Latin were all that the father could give him; and of science only horticulture (John William was a nursery-man).

John William was the strongest man in St. Gallen, so it was necessary that John be so also. This was attained through the teaching of the mail-order muscle builders, most of whom were German: the dynamic tension method of one, the cable exercisers of another, the bar bells and kettle drums. Then the turning pole and the flying rings for agility, and twice a day around the one mile track laid out around and through the Nursery.

This mile meander during the long summer was the kaleidoscopic habitation of all small creatures, rabbits and coneys, ground squirrels and bull snakes. They ran out from Hans as though he were an earthquake. There were owls by the treeful, and whole ghettos of grackle; clouds of scissortails and crows; thrush from the ground, catbirds and redwings from the low bushes, waxwings from the branches, flickers from the insides of trees, finches from the crowns.

There were coons and weasels, and fishers and martens in the ponds. There were grouse and wild turkey. John ran the meander every morning and again in the evening. It was the part of his physical education that he most enjoyed.

The third part of the man was cultivated in him in the way that only a German father knows. In some sons it breeds revolt, but in Hans it didn't. He was taught to be highly moral. He was always

moral, but he was less fiercely moral than his father.

He went to school at St. Joseph's in St. Gallen. He rode a pony in, or sometimes he walked or ran. But John Williams quarreled with the nuns about the teaching of his son, and he quarreled with Father Baumgartner.

"This that you teach, it is little stuff. It is for children," John William said.

"Well, John is only nine years old."

"They should know these things already. Some of them they should know before they are born."

"What would you have us teach them?"

"Why don't you teach them Greek?"

"In the fourth grade?"

"Yes, they learn faster then. They are younger then than they will be later."

"If you were your wife talking, I would put that down for an Irish bull."

"How would I be my wife talking? A priest should make sense."

"Not always, William, not always. Besides, I don't know Greek. I think they should learn to read and write English first."

"They can do that any time. There's many opportunities to learn English in America, but where can my John learn Greek? And religion, they're still on the Catechism. That's ridiculous."

"The Catechism is ridiculous?"

"Not to know it in the fourth grade is ridiculous. Why don't you teach them Aquinas and Albert? All that you have taught them in four years you could teach them in the evenings of a week."

"How would *you* do it, William?"

"Start anywhere, but get it done. One night you could make them memorize the Catechism. On the next night they read through American History. On the next you teach them to add and subtract and multiply and divide. Make them learn this thoroughly even if it takes an extra hour. You could leave algebra and geometry till later; it isn't necessary that very small children know them thoroughly.

"On the fourth evening teach them to read rapidly; this is a valuable gift. On the fifth evening teach them to compose; show them how to write clearly and briefly and always with a framework laid out and an end in view; teach them to express themselves on every subject in the world. It will be useful to them later.

"There, you have it in five evenings, not in four years. And on Saturday morning you could give special aid to the backward students (there will be some). Then, with these little things out of the way, you can begin to educate the children.

"This which you have been doing for four years is not educating. It

is only the sharpening of the pencil before you begin. And if you spend four or eight or twelve years in just sharpening the pencil, what time is left for the actual task?"

But it wasn't that simple. Children have their limitations.

2.

Bright is my Aerie.
Aloft and alone.
Others have other Homes,
This is my own.

Tumult and Rioting
Rises and grows.
Here is a Hideaway
Nobody knows.

*Schlürfen Sie Wieder
Die Waldungen ein.
Grünnallenden Lieder
Sind immerdar mein*

Golden-touched Greenery,
Russet and dun;
I am the *only* one
Lives in the Sun

Shagbarks assemble
For only the Free:
God, and Germanus,
And Gabriel, and Me.

Unwritten poems of Hans Schultz

Hans left home for his Wanderjahr when he was fourteen. He left to see the world and to acquire an education with an old friend of his father, Professor Kirol von Weinsberg Valeni who was the smartest man in the world.

The professor was, in fact, the last man who knew everything. There can never be another one, as knowledge has so constantly multiplied that it is no longer possible for one man to know it all. It is necessary that there be a new sort of man who is satisfied with knowing only a part of it. It is necessary, but the Professor wouldn't be so satisfied, and neither would Hans.

In his tide years, when he was at his crest, the Professor had really known it all, before the divergent sciences overwhelmed him with their sheer bulk.

The Professor was born in about 1860 in Bavaria, or possibly in a slightly different place and time. Now it was early spring of 1930 and he should have been about seventy years old, give or take a decade. John William had one traveled with the Professor, and now he wished his son to do likewise. And there is hardly any boy who is not eager for his Wanderjahr to begin.

Only Irene the mother was a little dubious of Professor Kirol, for she had also known him many years before. Both she and John William had first come to America at the expense of the Professor, though separately, and from different countries. This was before they were married and when they were still quite young people.

"Do you know when I first heard the word 'phoney', John?" his mother Irene asked him. "It was from the Professor and applied to himself. This was before I knew American much and before America knew 'phoney'. This is not English, no more than it is German; it is Yiddish. It had a different meaning then, more of the humorous and less of the shoddy. Our professor is a phoney of the old school. He is nobler than the current phonies, but he is tarred with the same brush. He helped make the brush."

"Then his isn't the greatest intellect extant?"

"Possibly it is, John. That is the tragedy. You may say (no, you would not say it, but the world might say) 'What is the smartest man in the world doing wandering about like a tinker?' That's what he does, but he says that dignity belongs to middling minds. What if he's right? Who can say?"

Hans said goodbye and went with the Professor.

There was a truck that looked like an old medicine-show wagon, and they drove it the eighty miles to Wisconsin Rapids where they were to meet the rest of the party. The Professor talked of many things on the way, and another boy might have been bowled over with the rapidity of them. The Professor was a rapid calculator and he taught Hans some of it and talked to him about it.

"This is Cerebral Athleticism, not to be confused with Thought; this, and the bulky additions and squarings and extractings. I will teach you how to do them all, but I will also teach you not to confuse them with more important things.

"Prodigious memory is also Cerebral Athleticism, and yet a man of thought who has not developed a prodigious memory is a fool. It is a handy tool and should be used, and anyone can learn to handle it. I myself have the most prodigious memory in the world.

"There are dull trades in the world, Hans, thousands of dull trades. Someone has to do them, but woe to him who does them from choice. Your Maker will hold you accountable on that last day for any dull thing you do: it's the unforgivable sin of which we hear. The same things are not dull to all, but anyone who tolerates dullness commits a crime.

"There is a Sabbath of the mind also. We are not allowed to become so absorbed with the furniture of the world as to have no time for thought. We have to realize where we are: always at the beginning, for all that it seems we begin in the middle. Humanity is no

more than morning dew on the grass. But we are also manna. We are but a contingent species at the beginning of a conditional life. That we be ever realized (made real) is a distant hope, and yet that hope has been implanted in us for a reason.”

The professor talked to Hans about the Tree. “The trees were not all forbidden. Only one tree was forbidden, the pseudodendron of false knowledge and the crooked way. And all the trees were trees of knowledge: knowledge of love and realization, or achievement and arriving and awakening and growing: of expanding and seeing and unfolding. We are caterpillars who will later turn into butterflies, who will later turn into stars. And then, who knows? Heaven is not a static state. It is the eternal explosive growth and development. The Redwood seed, which is smaller than the Mustard, grows into the giant of the earth. Christ must have regretted that He could not use the Redwood in his parables but His listeners would not have comprehended.”

And later, during the same ride in the truck that looked like a medicine-show wagon, the Professor talked to Hans about the Tree of Language, a favorite of his.

“I am possibly the only eminent philologist who believes literally in the story of the Tower of Babel, Hans. Know you that a scientist can be the most narrow-minded man in the world? Do you know that I was expelled from a dozen academies and learned societies in Christian lands for maintaining the Babel theory of the divergence of tongues?

“But it happened, and it happened at Babel and in historical times. Draw any map of the divergence and you will always come back to that valley as its center and to that time as its time. I’ve always thought of it as a catastrophic umlaut shift accompanied by much vowel breaking and a shattering of sonants as the dialects were born.”

The Professor had all the tongues of Europe and of the Levant, and all the important tongues of the world. “It takes at least a month to learn a language properly even if you have all the proper facilities. Do not try it at all unless you have them, except for amusement. There must first be a native speaker with whom you can live day and night. In the Carnival business you can nearly always secure a performer of almost any race on earth for this purpose. Then you must have the best books. But first you must have the prodigious memory. It takes twenty thousand words and logofoms to get soundly into a language. This means that you must learn six hundred new words a day, learn them completely, and learn them for life. If, by the third week of study, you find that you still do not dream in the language, then you must awaken yourself immediately and find out what you are doing wrong. It is an interesting field, but a hundred tongues should hold a

man unless he has a special interest in language.”

One forte of the Professor was rapid astronomic calculation. He could give the right ascension of any star on any day of any year, past or future. And, in a number of weeks, Hans would also be able to do this with the stars most likely to be asked, Alpha Centauri and Procyon, CC624 and Kapteyn's Star, Rigel and Vega and Betelgeuse. He learned their comings and goings, and also learned that this is the mere childhood of astronomy.

But it was the theories that the Professor loved; and it was on the theories that he quarreled with the professors (as though he were not the greatest of professors). “Now, this is how it is out there,” the Professor told Hans. “It is the tapestry of Heaven, the real Heaven of the Beatific Vision where we go when we die, and also where we already are now. The Infinity of Space is not made for a game: it is the real infinity rolling in the real eternity. But we see this tapestry now only from the reverse side. We see only the tangled threads behind: we have not the vision of the face of the picture itself.

“There are multitudinous emanations, and sight is only one of them which is given us here in the childhood of the soul. But it is all out there, Hell and Purgatory and Heaven, all there; or here, for we also are in the middle of Out There. And there is a time before time, and a time after time; a space beyond space, and a space inside space. They talk now of re-entrant space which is an attempt to see infinity. I talk also of re-entrant time which is the attempt to see eternity. Do you understand what I am saying, Hans?”

“Not entirely. But what I don't understand I will remember.”

“I am saying that it is not two things but one thing. There is not a spiritual universe beyond the material universe we are in now; it is the spiritual universe where we are. We are already in the middle of Heaven; we are already in the middle of Eternity. But we cannot know it yet.

“We are the seed which must explode into the new body and then continue to grow. A giant red star may be an aspect of an Archangel, or it may be the corollary to a statement of love. The physical and the spiritual are not two different things; they are two of the many different aspects of one thing. And Space and Time may be only two of many phases of the whole. The noon-day devil is walking among the Cepheids, and Lucifer who fell like lightning is still falling. At the same time Christ has not been born, and the time is today, and the world has already ended and exploded into something bigger. We are all of us contemporaries for we all live in eternity. Belloc wrote that it is good not to have to return to the Church. But the smartest man in the world (we both smile, Hans, for we know that I am a charlatan) left the Church, and so had to return. In the Father's House there are

mansions even for Charlatans.”

3.

If you will only think about it for a moment, you will see that the operation of a small carnival is the only possible occupation for the smartest man in the world.

The carnival was not set. The Professor owned some equipment. In the spring, he would either rent it out to another operator or he would lease some more for himself. He would charter various acts and form combos, or sometimes he would perform for others.

As a mind-reader, memory and information expert, and hypnotist, he had played most of the world: the old circuses of Europe and America, the music halls and vaudeville theaters of many countries. He was a nightclub magician. But mostly he was the answer man, claiming to answer any question in the world.

But now he was seventy years old, give or take a decade. While still the smartest man in the world, he was no longer the strongest. Actually he had never been the strongest man in the world, but he had often billed himself that way. He could still break horseshoes with his hands, or lift a horse in lifting harness, but he no longer had endurance nor agility. He no longer walked the ropes nor did the high dives, and he had not been on a trapeze for twelve years.

Hans at this time was fourteen and Betty Hochstapler was sixteen. He suffered from her. They worked together in the carnival and the clubs. She was beautiful, but he was not ready for her. She had worked in acrobatics and balancing acts all her life and her body was of iron. Her heart was also metallic, but of a peculiar alloy: a lot of brass, a streak of merciless vanadium steel, an element of extremely resilient phosphor bronze, and a warmer metal that often glowed cherry red. Often she was almost human.

She enjoyed humiliating Hans until he became an adept around the carnival. After that it would be very hard for anybody to humiliate him.

One afternoon they walked in the woods with Mabel the bear.

“If only you were older,” Betty said. “Will two years always make such a difference?”

“Not when I'm a hundred and you're a hundred and two.”

Well, it does now, Hanschen, and if you kiss me goodnight on the cheek again I'm going to bite off your nose. I'm worth lots more than a kiss on the cheek. Almost anyone would want to be my sweetheart.”

“How about Angelo Angelino?”

“He's all right, but I'd rather marry you.”

“Who said anything about getting married?”

“I said something about it, Hans. You should pay attention. What do you think I'm always talking about? It isn't good to have a bachelor

around a carnival. You'll have to get married in a couple of years anyhow, and I'm the prettiest girl on the lot. And you *are* a good catch. You are the *Zauberlehrling*, the Sorcerer's Apprentice. Did you know that they called you that? I love you more than anyone but I will not wait long."

But Hans was embarrassed when he was with the unbreakable blonde doll, so he conspired with Angelo Angelino that Angelo should marry Betty.

"But I have deferred to you," Angelo said. "You are the favorite of the Professor."

"But I don't want her."

"If you say you don't want her, you will have to fight me. Everyone should want her."

"Well, I do want her in a way, and she is wonderful. But I believe it would be better if you married her. It is possible that I will not always stay with the carnivals, and she could not live in anything else. And I'm too young. It would be better with you and her." So Angelo said that he would proceed to that goal.

Hochstapler had been the name that the Professor and others had given to the father of Betty. It means a high-class swindler. He was that until an uncooperative wool-hat killed him over a matter of less than three hundred dollars. This wool-hat was smaller game than Hochstapler usually hunted, and three hundred dollars to him was not even pocket money. Being killed by a wool-hat was like being slaughtered by a cotton-tail rabbit after killing leopards and lions.

The Wool-Hat had killed him with Hochstapler's own little barkers' mallet or gavel. He hadn't meant to kill him, he said, just to bang him on the head. He had no idea you could kill a grown man with a little thing like that. But Hochstapler was dead; and the Wool-Hat got a year and a day.

Betty had admired her father, and for the very qualities that had earned him his name. She believed that everyone in the world was crooked, and it worried her when she couldn't find the crookedness in someone, as in Hans. Betty, before marrying Angelo, was already connected in some ways with the Angelinos. It was a mixed family. Nowadays the Angelinos are mostly Italian, and after that they are mostly German; and beyond they are Bohemian and Mexican and Irish Tinker. Their names, besides Angelino, are Obermeyer and Viskochil, and Borg, and Trevino, and Larrigan. The cousins of them are all over the world.

Nor were these the only strains in the clan. Elena Angelino, who had the trained bears, always insisted that he great-grandfather was a bear and that this is why she understood them so well. The Professor also believed this, and Hans once said that it was the only silly thing

he had ever known him to believe. Yet the Professor never believed anything without a reason. He insisted that he had known both the great-grandfather and great-grandmother of Elena: and that the great-grandfather was a bear.

4.

He traveled several continents and saw much of the world. He learned to tell the *dukkerin*, the fortunes, as well as Nastasia Angelino, and he learned to talk Deep Romany. The Angelinos were also part Romany, Gypsy, and the Romany strain is wilder than the Ursine.

Hans read minds like the old Professor, and loved for the rest of his life to amaze people by answering unasked questions. And like the Professor he took the platform to answer any question in the world. He was a good sorcerer's apprentice, but he was still fifty years behind the old sorcerer.

Hans also was a strong man in those years. He had learned that it is no great trick for a husky boy to lift a horse in a lifting harness. A horse is a horse to the viewers, and a very shaggy horse of no more than eight hundred pounds will appear much heavier.

And there was the Donkey Walk. Pete the donkey would walk up a plank that was laid across the stomach of Hans, teeter it on the stomach, and walk down the other side. It is no great trick if you are made of iron. Even Betty could do it.

Coin-bending was effective, and horseshoes are not bad. It takes a certain sort of angry determination and a disregard for pain. Nobody can bend them cold. Even the strongest man must get a little mad first. Steel bars can be made of any temper, just tough enough that the strongest untrained country boy cannot bend them and the apprentice strong man can.

Hans was a good hypnotist though not in the professor's class. He could not develop the Presence of the Mystic. But he hypnotized people genuinely where the Professor sometimes had to fake. The real thing isn't quite as effective but it must sometimes be used where the counterfeit is beyond one's ability.

Hans could give an hilarious performance with the help of Betty and Mabel the bear. Mabel would come up at the call for volunteers from the audience, scattering the people as she came, for people are as afraid of a good bear as a bad bear.

"You want to volunteer for this?" Hans would ask. Mabel would nod.

"And it is absolutely true that you never saw me before tonight?" Hans would ask, and Mabel would shake her head 'No, Never'. This was the only dishonest part of the act, for Mabel knew Hans well and saw him many times a day.

"You are drowsy," Hans would say, and the bear would wobble her

head.

"You are a canary." Mabel would squeal, and flap her legs like wings.

"You are a kangaroo." Mabel would bounce around the stage like one.

"You have robbed a honey tree and the bees are all over you." Mabel would throw a fit at this for she was genuinely afraid of bees and this part was real to her.

Most of the act was broad, hypnotizing fat farmers into bathing beauties, and young boys into great lovers with Betty as the object. Betty herself was easily hypnotized, and Hans would put her into a state and make her eat fire and glass. Though she was from an old fire and glass-eating family, she could do it only when she was hypnotized.

But it was not till after Betty had married her cousin Angelo that Hans had much time around the carnival for reading. Thereafter he went through many hundreds of books on history and biography and science. Fortunately he now had the prodigious memory that the Professor had recommended. And he listened to the Professor in the odd hours around the carnival, for the Professor himself was a distillate of thousands of books.

"Learning is much maligned because it is confused with another thing of the same name," the Professor told him. "Learning seeks answers to the question Why; the grubby thing of the same name seeks answers to the question What. Remember that, if ever you are in doubt. There is a paradox that we must understand something of the ultimate answer before we can correctly phrase a partial question. We of the Faith, of course, are given to understand something of this ultimate answer. Be you not superior to those who seek answer to the question What; but at the same time never be intimidated by them."

Hans was not likely to be intimidated by the seekers of the secondary knowledge.

"I am glad that you also have been with a carnival, Finnegan, if only for six weeks," Hans told him as they talked together that summer. "If you hadn't known the carnivals then half the world would have remained closed to you. So many people know only half of the world. But you never have told me what you did with the carnival."

"Ah, I had certain duties concerning the horses, important though not very highly thought of. I was always a good man with a shovel and a pitchfork."

Hans himself left the carnivals in either 1935 or 1936, the spring anyhow that Betty had her second child, the spring that the Professor showed clear signs of slowing down and Hans felt himself in grave danger of inheriting the apparatus.

He decided that his Wanderjahr was over, and he left the roads
and went to Bohemia.

Not to the land of Bohemia: but to the Bohemia which is above,
which is our mother; or, less profanely, that Bohemia which is always
downtown, which is our off-uncle.

5.

This is the story of Li Tai Po
Who played the flute and sang,
Though both at once was a feat to know
In even the Land of Wang.

When Li Tai Po was a man full young
He loved till his throat did smart:
But his hands were burned and his heart was stung,
And he carried the sting in his heart.

And though he mourned for a year or more
That the world could be so wrong,
Like many another who sang before
He turned his grief to song.

He sang of the kings in their golden towers
And the people who live like mice,
And the people who work in the fields of flowers
And the watery fields of rice.

So the world grew sweet and quaint and close
And himself seemed far away,
And he tipped his jug to the cutters' blows
In the Chinese fields of hay.

When the Spring came down with its freshet rains,
When the sweet black earth was turned,
He traveled him wide o'er the Chinese plains,
And the blue days bloomed and burned.

He piped on his flute, and the pheasants cried,
And the bluebirds soared like darts;
And he sat him down by the river's side
And fashioned a song of hearts.

He piped on his flute, did old Li Tai,
And lo! there's a boat at hand,
And a Chinese girl with a flashing eye
Does bring the boat to land.

"And so you would ride with the fisher maid?
My boat's known many a treat,
But never a sage and a teacher staid,
Not an old old man so sweet."

Now Li Tai Po was tipsy then,
So he left his flute and wine
And his song of hearts by the plashy fen,

And went with the columbine.

"My father and mother," the girl did say,
"Would never believe if I told
That I rode with the sage on the watery way
When the day went down in gold."

The billows heaved on the vessel's side
With a merry click and clug,
And Li Po Tai was weasel-eyed
From the girl and the tipling jug.

"You know," he said, "it was long ago
That I loved you, I did, I swear,
In another form, in a form of snow,
When the spring of the year was fair."

"Sit down, Oh do, you sage, you fool,
And ride in the boat and I'll row,
Or yours is a watery death and cool
Where only the fishes know."

But the tale is short and the tale is spun,
Nor even the Gods of Hin
Can blot it away when once it's done,
So Li Po tumbled in.

"Alas," said the maid, "Alas, alack,
But the sweet old sage is dead."
And he lay with the seaweed under his back
And a green stone under his head."

So this is the ballad of Li Tai Po
Who sang while he played the flute,
And the gold's all gone, and the wine's run low,
And all of his songs are mute.

Unpublished ballads of Hans Schultz

But for the accident of birth in another land and of another race, Heine would have been Chinese, as essentially he was. And it was for this reason that Heine was such a strong factor in what Hans called his Chinese period.

Now all his life Hans had known these ballads, but he had only known them for this period when they would rise up and shake him with a Rhineland sadness that mixed in him gabled German roofs and Chinese straw houses and river junks with an off perfume known as Love in Springtime.

With Hans it wasn't a love for just one person (except a little bit for Trinali Peterson); it was love of everyone.

Whether it is possible to have a terrible nostalgia for a thing at the same time it is being lived, that was the case with Hans in a period of leisure and intensity that was both sad and joyful. These were the

elements of the complex: Hans who had several thousand dollars saved from his Wanderjahr; and his encounter with Cosmopolis which he had never known before except for short hours at a time; and a half-dozen young persons of talent of whom Trinali Peterson has the greater part; and New York itself which is more than Baghdad and Paris and Heidelberg and Lyonesse.

The Town had already been discovered at the time Hans arrived. There were even persons to whom it was an old thing. But actually it may have blossomed for the first time that spring.

Hans' first encounter with the young people was in a block of secondhand bookstores downtown. He had often had people ask him for the price of a cup of coffee or a hamburger or a bed for the night. But he had never before had anyone ask him for this.

"Hey, Dutch, give a poor scholar the price of a book, a quarter," a lad said.

This is a new approach," Hans told him. "Have you had breakfast?"

"No. Only the rich eat breakfast. Now that it is getting nice enough to read in the parks I always concentrate on bumming my book of the day first. About noon I'll try for coffee and a bun."

"What is the book?"

"Jaufre and Brunissende. It's in *Langue d'oc*."

"I know."

"You know? How do you know things like that, Dutchman?"

"The same way that you know I'm a Dutchman." Hans gave the fellow a quarter for the book, and also bought for himself *Les Cents Nouvelles Nouvelles* at the same table. He hadn't known that there were bookstores like this. He followed the scholarly panhandler to the park, and like him read for several hours. Then he bought a couple of giant bagels and a quart of beer which they split.

"Dutchman, you are a prince. Do you have a place to sleep?"

"To sleep? Yes, my rooms," Hans told him.

"His rooms, he says, as though it were an ordinary thing to have rooms. Only the rich have rooms. Dutchman, my name is James Fitzjames. I sleep in hallways and on the sofas of my friends. I am the most intelligent and least charming of the group. We are known for our intelligence and lack of charm. Where do you live?"

"In my hotel. I am looking for an apartment."

"It just so happens, Dutchman, that I am an expert on these things; where to live and how to live graciously. You do want to live graciously, do you not?"

"I'm not sure that is the word. Just a place to stay while I see the town and look to the future."

"I wonder how you got along before you met me. Have you the

price of a meal?"

"Yes."

"For three, that is."

"You count better than I do. Yes, for three then."

"You don't mind walking a few miles?"

"I walk all day long. I am seeing the town on foot."

They walked uptown and Jimmy talked. "The others all have talent; they are sure of that. I am not at all sure that I have it myself. I'm only sure that I come closer to it than the rest of them do. But if we don't have it, then it isn't to be had. When we are together in one room, I sometimes think that it would be better for the rest of New York to be destroyed than for that roomful to be destroyed. We have something new that is not anywhere except when we are together. But the rest of the Town, and the World itself which is the same thing, has gone about as far as it can go without it. We are the new heaven."

"Then maybe you shouldn't ever all be together. It would be dangerous. If something happened to you the loss might be too much for the world to bear."

"Is irony possible in a Dutchman? I wouldn't have believed it."

They picked up Trinali Peterson whose mother had named her Mary Jane. She herself had taken Trinali, a Gypsy name. All her poetry was about that name and the person it signified. *Ode to Trinali. Trinali at Sundown. To Trinali in a Red Dress. To Trinali at Dawn on March 4th.*

"I wrote that on March 4th, last Monday," she said. "And yet it isn't a poem of limited application. It symbolizes all the March 4^{ths} from the beginning."

"Does it also symbolize all the Trinalis from the beginning?" Hans asked.

"There are no others. There is only myself. I am meaningless in the plural."

"Is it possible that you are singularly meaningless?"

They went to a spaghetti house. Both of the Bohemes were hungry and they did well for themselves. They had beer and wine, but they could not drink with Hans. In spite of their being free spirits they were crocked in an hour.

They took a taxi and went down to the Village to find an apartment for Hans. It was during this taxi ride that Trinali wrote her celebrated *Ode to Trinali on the Way to the Village*:

"There are new pigeons this morning with washed red feet,
And new dust for springtime, for the old dust is all worn out.
One cannot cry old tears in a world that was born this morning;
But let us buy a little salt and we will fashion new tears for new woes.
A bird in a tree can perch on but one bough,

And Trinali can ride in only one taxicab at a time.'

Hans, when he first knew them, was never sure whether he was being spoofed. To him, poetry was English or German ballad, or French lyric, or Latin or Greek heroic. These at least scanned, and he said so.

"Scun," said Trinali. "Skin, scan, scun. I thought you said this Dutchman understood words, Jimmy. No, Trinali can't be scun."

Trinali had a folder of hundreds of pages of the things.

"This stuff is a little like modern art," Hans said. "Who is the joke on?"

So Trinali wrote another poem, rapidly and out loud:

'The world is made of pieces left over from other worlds,

A scattering of granite mountains that were fingers of a statue in the
older world,

The fundamental gneiss underlying the continents that was a little
building block in another world;

The salt and medicated ocean that was one mouthful of mouthwash of
a lesser citizen of the older cosmos,

The fauna of the earth which was as fleas combed out of the coat of
one small dog of the older order,

Or possibly combed out of the coat of one small flea on one small dog
of the Ancestral sun.

And Hans thinks that this is a joke

But what do you think Hans is?

Has Hans forgotten that he is also Orpheus?'

"Are there any rules for playing this game?" Hans asked them.

"You will learn them as you go along," Trinali said.

Hans took a three room apartment and paid \$45.00 a month. You understand that this was a long time ago. From this Trinali was to receive credit of \$5.00 on account from the landlord as a finder's fee, so she would be permitted to live in her own room a while longer.

There were two facing sofas, and Jimmy and Trinali took one each and lay down to sleep off the wine, while Hans went back uptown to complete his move. He hired a pick-up dray for his trunk and suitcases. Then he got groceries and the papers and put on supper and worked around the place while he waited for his friends to waken.

He had been lonesome for his first two days in the city, and now he had found companions of a sort. He opened the folder of Trinali and read more of the stuff:

'Trinali is a lot like a cat.

She makes a racket and howls on alley fences;

But don't imagine that that is what she wants to do.

She wants to live in a room and lap cream and lie by the fire

And have some one pet her.

But to look at her you would never imagine that that is what she wants.'

Somehow Trinali didn't look like an alley cat as she lay there sleeping. She was very young and had rusty black hair which she insisted was red. She was slight, not at all mature of figure, and was barely saved from beauty by minor irregularities of feature. Hans suspected even then that she had no real depth in her, but she DID glow on the surface.

Hans woke them for supper when he saw that, left to themselves, they would sleep forever. Trinali went to her room for candles and brought them.

"Only barbarians eat by electricity," she said. "It's vulgar. And besides, the only civilized person in the building had her electricity turned off last Tuesday for non-payment, and she doesn't want anyone else to use it either.

"I get the candles from Lupido. He affects candlelight in his café. But he burns them down only to a certain length. He gives me the stubs, and I steal the larger ones. The ogre here makes me pay my own light bill, so I use candles. He gives me old bread too (Lupido does, not the ogre) and left-over wine. A lot of people come to the Village for the atmosphere when they're courting, and order wine and don't finish the bottle. I pour them all together. And I save the bottles. I make dolls and novelties out of the bottles and the corks and the raffia skirts."

"What do you make besides dolls?"

"Figures. Dresden figures and marionette regulars, and Mexicans and Donkeys and Clowns and Prize-Fighters. You can make a lot of things out of cork and raffia if you're an artist. But it's a sad commentary on our times that the world's greatest living poetess should have to make figures out of corks for a living, and beg secondhand from an old moustache like Lupido."

"You sell these things?"

"I sure do try to, Hans, but I don't sell very many of them. And I make lamps and toys. I dye the corks in a dishpan for this. I dye them only eight basic colors. One must standardize. It gives me a nice cork stock but it makes the dishes taste funny.

"I also make things out of driftwood. I did have my room piled nearly to the ceiling with driftwood, but I burned it in the winter

when they cut off my heat to make me move. And, as if that weren't enough, they complained that my chopping wood at night kept the other tenants awake. Why don't they sleep in the daytime like respectable people do? I barricaded myself in so they couldn't evict me. And I would have starved to death except that Lupido fed me with a basket that I let down from my window like St. Paul."

"Did Lupido feed St. Paul with a basket?"

"Of course not, Hans, they weren't even contemporaries. St. Paul escaped in a basket once. I thought you were educated. I paid a little on my rent now so I can stave off eviction for a while. Hans, are you rich?"

"Ten dollars or more unencumbered. Enough to rent a truck for a day."

"Yes, I am rich then."

"To take me to a place, to two places in Jersey. To get driftwood, and to get cypress knees. *Oh*, how I need cypress knees! You can make so many things with them."

"Do you make money from these things, Trinali? Are they so distinctive? They all look pretty much alike to me."

"I know they do, Hans, but believe me they aren't supposed to. It is my failure that they all look alike."

"I will decorate my flat in the Chinese style," Hans said. "Have any of you ever experienced a Chinese period? Do you know anything about the Chinese style?"

Of course they did. "We'll hang rugs on the walls, and put a lot of red and black stuff around," Jimmy said. "And Adam Scanlon has a Mandarin picture that he might sell you for a thousand dollars."

"That's too much. For a thousand dollars I'd paint it myself."

"Maybe we could get him down to ten dollars, but I doubt it. He has a sliding scale, but fifteen dollars is usually rock bottom."

"How high does it go?"

"He's gotten as high as fifty, but he'd take a thousand. He could be persuaded to take even more; he's unscrupulous. You couldn't go wrong at any price. It'd be worth a hundred thousand some day."

"You really think so, Jimmy?"

"A new Leonardo would bring that, and this boy is better."

"Well, we can't be sure that he's better," Trinali said, "but we know that he's just as good. You consider the four or five genuine ones of Leonardo and then you think what a few hundred more would be like and you say 'Boy, he's good.' But what if the four or five were the only good ones and the rest were dogs? Besides, we should consider that Adam Scanlon is only twenty years old. He should paint for seventy years yet. And consider, you will have one of his early ones. I think you'll be lucky to buy it for fifteen dollars."

"Hell, I can paint myself. I might paint a Mandarin."

"What did you ever paint, Hans?" Jimmy asked him.

"I painted hundreds of square yards for the carnivals: pictures of all the acts, motorcyclists and monsters, and the dance of the swords, and the houris, things like that. I painted Edgar the Seal, and Zippo the Fire-Eater. Lots of times I'd hear people come out of the shows and say that they weren't as good as the pictures. I bet more people have seen my pictures than those of Adam Scanlon."

"Maybe you're a primitive," said Jimmy. "We ought to promote you and make a fad out of you. We can't seem to make a fad of any of us. A good Primitive will beat an Orthoclast. An Orthoclast is a Cubist who believes that everything in the world has a natural cleavage, and he paints it cloven in the attempt to show matter inside-out. And a Primitive is almost as good as a Tone-Control Artist."

"A Tone-Controller considers colors only as their musical equivalents, and orchestrates all the hues to create vibrations that only the more intense of us can comprehend. One can enjoy a Tone-Control painting as well with one's back to it. The Ambient vibrations are the whole thing. The Visual Index may be ignored, and often is."

They drank some of Trinali's old wine. Then they drank some of Hans' new wine. And Trinali mixed the two together. "It is a dialectic," she said, "the interplay of action that began before the wine was born: the action of brother water and brother vinegar, or brother sun and brother bacteria. Then we put the old wine in new bottles and the new wine in old bottles in scriptural contradiction, and *voila!* The synthesis, the Trinali Cocktail! I would write an ode to Trinali with a wine glass in her hand, were it not that the hand already holds the glass and that I have already used the title;
'Trinali holds a half-globe of sheer crystal

That is like the transparent sphere of Fifth Heaven.

It is on a stem which, though fragile, is strong enough to hold the dome of Fifth Heaven.

And in this little glass is the mystery of death and resurrection.

It isn't very hard to make wine; this is the way:

Use a quart of water to each quart of grapes,

And a pound of sugar to each quart of juice.

Put the grapes in the water and let it stand for a week;

Strain it and put it in a cask with the sugar.

Put in more sugar and a little brandy if you feel sorry for it.

Let it gestate. Its gestation period is six months.

Or there is a potato wine that you can make in thirteen days.

You can start it at the new moon,

And it will be ready to drink at the full moon.

Now, isn't that a simple thing to do?

But when you do it, a God is born.

This is the Resurrection and the Life.

Do you know the meaning of the Genie in the Bottle?"

This is the God imprisoned by the dry desert people who hate the God.

You can imprison the God in a bottle,

But it sure is hard to keep the cork in!

"Don't you think it would be nice if I died young?" Trinali asked. "I should have died when I was nineteen, and now I'm twenty. But if I had died before I was twenty, I wouldn't have written my greatest Ode, *To Trinali in a Rainstorm*. I hadn't come that far yet. My style matured late. It has reached its full bloom only within the last eleven days. But now I believe that I have written enough in my High Period to amaze the ages, and I am still young enough to die with effect."

"Do you have it planned?"

"Oh no, that wouldn't be in the code at all, Hans. It would be nice to drown, but I'm a good swimmer, and it is not romantic to die of cramps. Any action on my part will be intuitive and mystic. Perhaps it will come at the time when I am writing one of my greatest Odes: *To Trinali on the Brink*, or *To Trinali with Clarity*."

6.

It was like an old elephant's graveyard with huge piles of bones. Some of them were too huge for elephant bones; they were of the mammoths who were before the elephants. Some of them were too huge for mammoth bones; they were of the behemoths who were before the mammoths. And the oldest and largest of all were the bones of old Leviathan himself who was made before the other giants. It was Trinali who suggested this image; but, one suggested, it took hold of all of them. She had always called this conglomerate of driftwood the Elephants' Graveyard.

To an expert (Trinali) all the cast-up wood was different.

"Now, here is a stogy log," she said. "It will never be anything else. It has been through the Maelstrom and over the Cataract and around the Horn. It has nosed the ribs of old Spanish ships and been in the Green Castles under the Continental Shelf. But it hasn't been inspired

or deepened. It hasn't caught fire from the sea-born iodine or the gold-dust in its veins, nor learned the secrets of the plankton.

"But here is one worth taking. It is convoluted like a Conch and armed like an Octopus. It has gained in aspect from all that it has met in the water and under the sun. It has fraternized with the Giant Squid and gained from its shapeliness. It has looked the Oyster in the eye and learned from it Humility. It has leapt with the Dolphin and plunged with the Porpoise: and before that, in its first life, it shaded Georgia cattle and had honeybees in its hollow heart. It went down to the Green Death, and came up a talkative and reminiscent old ghost. And now it will be transformed by the magic saw and knife and wood-rasp of Trinali into a leering lamp that nobody can look at only once."

This old wood graveyard was the meeting place of the crows and blackbirds who came from the near woods and called and taunted the busy sea-birds. It also has an attraction for the butterflies who came from the meadows by the dozens and flew about its old branches.

"Salt and Sulphur," said Schraffenberger who was with them. "Butterflies, like cattle, will come to salt. It makes them glossy. You can tell the difference on those who've had access to it. I'm serious."

"You see," Adam explained, "the sky was different during the High Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It isn't just the aging of the paint. It isn't just one painter copying another. We may take it for observed fact that the sky had more red and brown in it, a slyer touch of green, an added purple in the gray, more rose in the shading of the cumulus. And thunderheads had more green light in their black.

"This is a High Renaissance sky that I am painting now. But you will immediately notice that the Sea is older. This is a symbolic painting of a New Heaven over an Old Abyss. This is the Sea of the Low Middle Ages after the Empire died. There was dread on the Ocean then and seafaring had slackened. There were red lights under the water and they gave the impression of abysmal depth. You will notice also on the Sea the absence of a Ship, but have you understood that the absent ship is the *Argo*? How have I suggested this? Even Hans who will sail on the *Argo* has not understood this.

"Were I painting a later Sea (say of the sixteenth century) it would be bluer. Blue was the period signature. And were this a still later seascape (eighteenth century) I would begin to insinuate a little more green again, for there we were completing a cycle. Do you believe that I imagine this?"

That is the way Adam Scanlon talked. That is also the way Leonardo talked, as we have it from very old men who knew him in their youth. But Adam was the better talker.

For lunch, Trinali had a basket half-filled with old bread from Lupido's. Schraffenberger had gigged a long fish which they split with

an axe; it was too tough for a knife. They gutted it and spitted it over an open fire and ate it with the bread. Hans noticed about Trinali for the first time, as he watched her work, that she was herself made out of driftwood and had cypress knees. She wasn't pretty, whatever she thought of herself. She was rough and sea-stained, but she was remarkably convoluted and full of sea-born iodine.

"Fish and old bread," said Fitzjames. "These are the foods of poverty, for we are all poor except Hans who is rich."

"We have as much as the Lord had," said Trinali. "And if a multitude should come I would feed them also. I have that talent."

But Hans their rich uncle had brought a case of beer so they did well.

After lunch, Scanlon painted another seascape, but of a different time and place. These were very good, and it was easy to see why he could command as high as fifteen dollars a picture, and why the only ones who really understood the two of them classed him with Leonardo.

Trinali wrote a poem: *To Trinali in the Old Wood Graveyard on the Dead Sea*:

'Trinali is a lot like Lot's wife;

She is also a lot like Lot.

She never was one of the bad ones.

It wasn't her fault that the damned place burned down.

She always told the other girls they hadn't ought to carry on like that.

But when there's a fire it sure is hard not to look at the fire engines.

One thing always bothered her: they never mentioned the trees.

Whatever happened to the Green Groves of Gomorrah?

Some of those trees are here, much changed;

There's a lot of salt in them,

And there's marks of an old fire and the wrath of God.

Now Trinali likes to sit under one of the trees that used to shade

The old saloon on the corner of Beelzebub and Hell-Raiser Streets

Where they crossed just about Infinity Square.

You know the place I mean, there the Brimstone Combo played:

With Birsha on the Diatonic Harp,

Shinar on the nine-stringed Kithara,

Bera on the B-Flat Trumpet,
That big African Zoar on the Drums,
And Schemember on the Ram's Horn.
This was the saloon where all the people were not bad;
In fact, this is where the Seven Just Men used to come for a toddy
every night.
It is still cool under the old trees in the Elephants' Graveyard;
But the Dead Sea burns in the awful sun,
And all the Birds over it are Devil Birds.'

Trinali announced that she had enough driftwood. Then they drove to a miserable tidewater swamp where she cut cypress knees. She took her shoes off and waded in. The sun went down and the insects came like clouds. Hans turned on the headlights of the rented truck, and Trinali chopped in their glare.

"No man, be he not insectivore or mad, goes willingly into a swamp," Schraffenberger said. That was the opinion of all of them. They didn't help her. She chopped knees large and small. She tossed them, some of them half again her own weight, into the back of the truck. After a while the boys forcibly put her into the back of the truck along with the things and drove away.

"I wish you could have known them, Finnegan," said Hans as he told about them that summer. "I have often wondered whether they had talent."

"I'll not contribute to the heresy that the world is small," said Finnegan. "It's as large as it should be. Naturally I knew Scanlon when I was van Ghi." "Well, is he?"

"As good as Leonardo? About as good. When I knew him several years ago he had become a solid professional. All professionals are competent. Some are better than others. He was better than others. I speak as one of the half-dozen men in the country really able to appraise these things."

"Yes, I know," said Hans.

7.

"My name is Elmer," he said, "Elmer Eggleton Ellenbogen. The first name I legally changed. My mother cried when I did it. She is also sad that I have spent such a large portion of my patrimony. Much of it has gone to the subsidy presses. But how else could *Dawn Country* have seen the light of day? Or *Shenandoah Saga*? Or *The Man From Minneapolis*? These are my three published novels. All have been solid successes with the people who count. The question is whether I can afford any more such solid successes.

"My poetry is uncollected and unpublished, but I recite without invitation, and everybody capable of understanding it has already heard it. It is classified for nine volumes: *Sonnets and Succotash*, *Corn Country Cantos*, *Arena del Mar*, *Hellas Remembered*, *Rhineland Reverie*, *Broken Cisterns and Living Water*, *Salt Water Stanzas*, *Rain before Morning*, and *Fog-Horn Symphony*. It is really an amazing body of work.

"And there are my translations. The Arabs say that days spent in the Chase do not count in the length of life. I believe that talent devoted to translating is not subtracted from the total talent that it is given a man to express. I have done the Greek Anthology and the Spanish Gold Book. I have done Horace. Do you know that he has been translated more than two hundred times, and yet mine is the only readable version in verse? I have done Petrarch. I will do the Elder Edda as soon as I learn Icelandic. Do you know Icelandic?"

"Yes," Hans said.

"That's odd. I didn't ask the question to get an answer. You're new. Who are you?"

"Hans."

"Hans, I love a good listener. Never change. Monosyllables of assent are enough. You couldn't be listening to a better man."

"Endymeon writes popular songs," said Trinali.

"She says that with a certain contempt," Endymeon commented sadly, "and yet it is better to write a popular song than an unpopular song. Mine is the low estate of one who would do pot-boilers and cannot even get the fire started under the pot. And now the wolves have eaten off both of my legs up to the knees."

"What songs do you write?" Hans asked.

"It-could-have-been songs, waiting-in-the-rain songs, a-fortune-teller-told-me songs, ship-without-a-sail songs, shanty-town-stomp songs, Chicago-hot songs, I-come-from-good-old-Texas-and-I-won't-take-off-my-boots songs, green-eyed-baby songs, I-remember-my-mother-in-her-Sunday-smock-I-remember-the-bee-trees-and-the-old-butter-crock songs, spring-never-comes songs, sorry-I-missed-you-sorry-we-met-never-forgive-you-never-forget songs, golden-hair-doll songs, Sally songs, Helen songs, stars-in-your-eyes songs. That will give you an idea."

"Where do you peddle them?"

"Places like this. The singers can only learn six tunes, but my songs will fit one of them always. Anna Louise who sings at the Cyclone Cellar gave me a dollar and a half for exclusive rights to one of them tonight. Anna Louise is more individual than the other singers. She can remember only one tune, but I write good words for it. Then they introduced me as the composer of the new smash hit, and Cyclone

Samenoff who runs the Cyclone Cellar gave me a drink at the bar. Also, when they passed the hat for the composer, I got a dollar and eighty-five cents. Of course I seldom realize that much on one of my smash hits. It was unusual. Also I go to work at the MontMart at two o'clock and play till morning. The pianist, on past performance, will collapse at exactly two o'clock. I will get a dollar for the shift and something in tips. Now this might not seem like a lot to you, but it is when you're poor."

"You don't feel like a lightweight when you write jump-bump googies?"

"I don't, Hans, but sometimes I pretend that I do. It makes good regretful copy. This is a stanza I wrote today:

'The spider works in the corner,
And the small mice work all night,
And the whole wide world is the mourner
For the things you kept not bright.'

"These are stanzas addressed to myself. This is to be the second of four stanzas. I am looking for a climax line for the fourth stanza, and I will build the rest back from there."

"Endymeon is a sculptor also," said Trinali.

"I have had to repress that phase. In November I will be twenty-one and I will get the rest of my money. Then I will buy another block of marble. There is a mystery about the last block I had. I bought it from another sculptor when I took my room. It was already there and never worked.

"I carved a group of nereids from it. I sold the piece for a handsome figure. But when the time came to make delivery I could not begin to get it out of the room. You have heard of people building a boat in the basement. But dammit the whole block had got in there some way. The landlord said that he didn't know how it had gotten in, but none of the windows and doors were damaged; and they damnsite weren't going to be damaged getting it out either, he said.

"I have twenty-two inch doors and twenty-six and a half inch windows, and the minimal axis of the carving was forty-five inches, and that of the block before I started must have been sixty. I sliced it up like a pie with rock saws and gave a nereid to each of my friends. There was just no way to get it out of there whole.

"There was one other item the sculptor had left behind: a book on Teleportation."

They all went to the Cyclone Cellar to see Anna Louise. She was wonderful. But Hans was shocked to find that Endymeon had lied to him, the only time any of the group ever did. Anna Louise DID know more than one tune. She knew every tune in the world. She sang beautifully and got most of the crowd to sing with her. She played the piano and sang, and none of us will ever forget it. And if we ever see

her again we will tell her how wonderful she is.

They all went to the Cat in the Fiddle, the Three Four Five Club, the Red Windmill, and Coq Bleu. And at dawn they disintegrated.

8.

She was buried on the first of September of that year; and to Hans and Fitzjames, the only Romans present, the non-denominational service was chilly and inadequate.

With her was buried one of her odes: *To Trinali in her Coffin with her Red Hair Loose about her*:

‘Trinali is beautiful in her coffin.

Hers is the only cheerful face in the room.

Everyone else looks glum and a little embarrassed.

Now she is wiser than all the rest:

She knows the secrets of the stars, and possibly is one of them.

And you are all like people who are still on the shore,

But Trinali is out on the immeasurable sea.

But Oh My God! What if there is nothing there?

What if there is nothing out there but a very thick fog

That smells a little bit like lilacs

Remembered from a long time ago?’

“And that is all there is to it,” Hans said to himself at the time. Even when he was with them he had questioned whether they were real people. But if people are not real in the suddenness of their youth, when will they be real?

9.

Hans acquired hidden resources in this time. Always after that, he could wire or cable or draw somehow from a distance any money that was required. But he didn't get around to telling Finnegan that part of his life, though he told him the rest of it in the evenings of that visit.

Hans went into the army in the spring of either 1941 or 1942. After that, he merges a while with the rest of the Dirty Five.

This was in a railroad station and he was angry and shaken. For one thing he did not know where he had left his baggage which was of value. For another thing he didn't know if he was going by the name of Finnegan or Solli, and he didn't know if it mattered.

When Finnegan had the walking blues he often went around the clock and covered many miles. He was wearing a dirty sports jacket with many pockets in it, in all of which there was money. Not yet collected, still he became calmer. The old serpent that had risen in him and gnawed for a while had now coiled up and gone to sleep. It was a fine summer morning, the day after he had got off the train.

Finnegan went to see Mary Catherine Carruthers, Casey's old girl. He had known her only during the reunion week in St. Louis, but now it seemed as though they had always been friends, or cousins at least.

Finnegan went to see Hilary Hilton at his office. He had to write his name on a slip. It came back with a note 'Don't know any Finnegan.' "You think an eighth of a cent isn't much, Finnegan. That's right at four hundred dollars on the lot. You've got to learn to pick up these little sums."

It was two o'clock in the morning and the moon was high and bright. A bewildered young man picked himself up stitchless from the middle of the road and moaned:

Show Boat was writing to Dotty:

Chapter Ten

Distressed Merchandise

1.

Somewhere lately he had caught the whiff of the man who had sworn to have him killed. But he'd forgotten whether he didn't give a damn about it anymore, or whether he did.

He had been put off the train after a brief scuffle. But whether he had already ridden the train to its destination and was put off because this was the terminal and they wanted to clean the cars, or whether he had been put off immediately after boarding it and had not yet made the trip, that was the unanswered question. He didn't much care where he was going; he just didn't want to be put off the train before he got there.

Knowing what town he was in (and he did not know) would be of no use, since he did not recall his destination. The lady at Travelers' Aid was first patient, then alarmed.

"I don't see how I can help you if you can't tell me what you want or where you want to go, or if you need money, or what is your name or the names of your friends," she said.

"You keep asking me questions I haven't got to yet," he protested. "All I wanted was that you read my ticket and tell me where I'm going."

"But this is an old racetrack ticket. Would it help you to know that you were in Hot Springs seven weeks ago?"

"But doesn't it say where else I was or where I'm going?"

"No, no, it's just a race track ticket. It isn't a railroad ticket. I think you are sick. Do you know what is wrong with you?"

"Korsakoff's Psychosis."

"Should I take you to a doctor?"

"No. They don't know anything about it. They say it comes from drinking. That's the same thing they used to tell my father. He acted funny, just like I do."

"What is that piece of wood you have there? Is there writing on it?"

"Not all the time. It's a piece of the Speaking Oak of Dodona. It was set into the prow of a ship I sailed on once, and I stole it."

“Oh. Did your father stop drinking when they said he had that kind of psychosis?”

“No. Why would he?”

Now it sometimes happens that, after speaking of a person one has not seen for years, that person will appear. The next person Finnegan saw was his father. Giulio Solli looked shabby and sad. He had always been a poor bum, but he's also been The Monster Forgotten.

“Just look at yourself,” Finnegan told him. “You never were anything but a dock worker and you never worked more than four days a week. Did you give mama your pay before you started out? How much did she give you back to drink on? Oh, I forgot, that was a long time ago. Well come along, you look like you need one.”

They went out of the station and found a beer place. Finnegan ordered two glasses.

“Do you want them both now?” a man in an apron asked Finnegan.

“Sure we want them both now,” Finnegan said. The man in the apron put both glasses down in front of Finnegan, but Finn pushed one across to his father.

“The trouble with you is that you never were anything but an old peasant,” Finnegan told him. “You never did get the dirt out of your hair. We don't know why mama ever married you. If she had married someone else, we would have been different. Jake would be different. He wouldn't be driving a taxi. He'd be doing something big. And Patricia would be different. She is the best of us, but she never had a chance. She could have climbed high if she'd had a place to start. Look at me: a nose you gave me that you didn't even have yourself. Why should a McCracken marry a Solli? Fifty million men there were in the country and she had to marry you. What got into her?”

Giulio Solli did not answer anything, and he did not drink his beer. It was as if he didn't hear well or had something else on his mind. His moustache was unkempt and scraggly and he appeared even darker than previously. His hands were like a couple of gnarled old roots. And if he had always been a quiet man, now he was very quiet.

“You probably don't know that we had a hard time of it after you died,” Finnegan told him. “You almost didn't get buried. And mama changed a lot. When you have a hard time of it it makes you lose patience.”

The old peasant Giulio began to cry, deeply and silently. Then he went away.

That was the first time that Finnegan knew that his father had loved them all very much and that he had done everything he was capable of doing. And they had all derided him and possibly they had killed him. And none of them had ever loved anyone. Except Patty a little bit, and their mother Mary McCracken who must have loved the

old contadino or she would never have married him.

2.

Now he had found his papers and stubs and recovered his suitcase. It had one been the most valuable suitcase in the world; it still contained a fortune, mixed with old socks and trash.

Now he had taken a room and had a place to go when he was tired of walking. There were a number of indications adding up to near certainty that the town was Chicago and the month was somewhere between May and November. The year could have been '50 or '51 or '52. It is not important to know the exact year. Not to have any idea of the year would be a sign of deterioration.

There was one year that was lived twice. Thereafter Finnegan always phrased the years to himself as double, as 1950—Old Style 1951. Finnegan lived a year in a little more than a week, a full and in most ways a pleasant year; and came out of it to find that it had all been one binge and the year was still ahead and unlived. There are aspects of that lost, or gained, year that still have not been explained. For one year there Finnegan always knew what was going to happen in the world, since he'd lived that year before, but he didn't know what was going to happen to himself.

It was anyhow the fifth or sixth or seventh year of the Second Interbellum period, and it was morning. Not literally morning perhaps; it had been morning quite a while. It had possibly been afternoon by the time Finnegan got the Howlands on the phone and learned that they were still in town.

The Howlands were in the chips. They had property and progeny. Gilbert Finnegan Howland would carry on the tradition of the triple-named dynasty. Howland Jerome Howland now ran the Club Royal, a very plush place. Howland had been raised up hard and had developed a taste for luxury that was paying off. Another man wouldn't have known what they wanted, what was the real craving of them now that they had money. Howland knew that they wanted to be charged, that they wanted to be overcharged. Bucks who were born in a cotton-patch cabin liked to spend a dollar and a quarter for mixed drinks and eight dollars for steaks. They liked to order Danish beer and Hungarian Tokay. The chef was from Martinique. The Orchestra was old classic jazz. The games were set for a fairly heavy house take. But there were many things that Francine did not like about it.

"We possibly do not have any money at all, Finnegan," she said, "and there is really no way to tell whether we have or not. We make a lot of money, but Oh we do spend a gosh awful lot of it. We could have a fine house for a year on what we pay a month for this apartment. Just to live on the platinum coast! 'You have to think big,' my man says. God, how can you think big when you haven't any

brains? But it's what he wants and I'll only be able to get him away from it slowly. Finnegan, it isn't right, but what should I do? Do you still drink like a gar-fish?"

"There is a conspiracy of silence on that. My friends no longer ask."

"I'll be no part of the conspiracy. I see that you do. Finn, we are glad that you came to see us first in town. We will always have your room for you no matter where we live. We love you a lot. I've kept track of your pinko friend but I haven't anything good to report on him."

3.

Mary Catherine was older than Casey, and possibly older than Finnegan. She was no more than thirty-three now, but she was the only one of the group who had ever showed any signs of aging. She had quite a few gray hairs and was a little heavier, but that was only at first glance. After that, her friendliness swallowed up everything. She kissed Finnegan quickly and as quickly set a table: beer, pigs' feet, blue cheese, and little smoky sausages. She put the coffee on. She knew what Finn liked. Finnegan took off his shoes and he sat on Mary Catherine's lap. It was late, and Mary Catherine had been in bed.

"I never see any of you," she said. "About once a month Casey gets morbid and calls me up. He's married now, you know, to Mary Jean. He wants me to go out with him because Mary Jean is going out with someone else. You'll go see him, won't you? I guess I'm the only one who still thinks he's wonderful, and he isn't. I don't know why he's gone crazy for so long, but someday there'll be an end to it.

"I know it's wrong, but I was glad when he married Mary Jean instead of someone else because he couldn't have a valid marriage with her. She was married in the Church the first time; Hilary is a fish-eater too. He says he will kill Casey when he gets in the mood, and he's capable of it. Casey is deathly afraid of him; he worries about it all the time. He worries about a lot of things. Isn't it an unholy mess?"

Finnegan let her up to get the coffee. Then she came and sat on his lap.

"They all write to me, Finn," she said, "Duffey and Mrs. Duffey; I knew her when I was a little girl, and Duffey almost as soon. And Stein, and Margaret Stone. You didn't know that Casey and Absalom were acquainted before the war, did you? None of the bunch knows it, not that it goes back so far. Casey hates him. He says that they have traded souls, and now he will have to go to Hell in place of Stein. He says that the most noxious corner there is prepared for Stein and he doesn't think he'll like it. It is inconceivable that anyone could be so mixed up. Do you remember when you stood on my stomach in St. Louis to cure me of the hiccups?

"Show Boat writes to me once a week. She writes to everybody in the world once a week. They all write to me, Marie and Dotty, and that pretty Mary Schaeffer. Everybody is doing well except you and Casey, and perhaps both of you are in a worldly way. A lot of people are puzzled about your source of money. Did you find a gold mine or something?"

"Yes. Not a gold mine, but that was the effect."

"I worry a lot about you, honey. I have a great capacity for worry."

She put some old records on her record machine. They played 'Seems Like Old Times' and 'It's a Great Big World' which had been their theme songs of the reunion week in St. Louis.

"Do you remember when you rode on little Maurine's back in St. Louis and I was jealous?" she asked. "I still am. I don't go out very much, Finn. I don't want to get married. It looks like I won't ever get over Casey. You do a lot of unessential things when you take yourself out of circulation. Do you know that I'm the best bridge player that you're likely to meet? Do you know that I go to concerts now, and I belong to three book clubs. And I paint.

"Oh Finnegan, you're a painter, a real one. I'd forgotten. I'll show you, but not now. I take public speaking and I belong to a club. Can you imagine me starting that at my age? I keep track of the envelope collections at the parish. And I have recordings of the operas and everything worth hearing. I have a thousand dollars worth of records. Isn't that a waste? I eat too much of everything. That's another thing you do when you're lonesome. But when are *you* going to settle down yourself, hon? If it isn't to be Dotty, then I know a real nice girl for you here in Chicago. Oh, she is nice!"

"Everybody knows a real nice girl for me, Mary Catherine, but I couldn't find a better one than you. Maybe I just fell in love with you."

"You fall in love too much for an unreclaimed bachelor. Only you don't. But you're in love with the little schnook Show Boat, aren't you?"

"Yes, but nobody knows it but Show Boat and myself."

"Oh, the way you looked at her! Vincent got her wrapped up just in time. I've been improving my mind, Finnegan. I do have one. I discovered it quite by accident."

Mary Catherine got out some Irish whisky which she had had unopened since Christmas.

"Dotty says that you worry that you are some kind of alien creature, dear. Finnegan, we are *all* of us alien creatures. We are a flight of aliens. Why have the scientists not noticed that man is the only creature in the world who is not in his proper environment, who has no proper environment? The world is a mighty strange and crooked ship that we ride; but your group voyages particularly.

Finnegan, *do not leave Casey out, I beg you.* He is one of the original crew."

They played about a third of Mary Catherine's thousand dollars worth of records. They talked some tangled talk, and they indulged in some tangled antics.

When it was morning, Mary Catherine walked downstairs with him and kissed him passionately in the street.

4.

This time Finnegan wrote 'I am a friend of Casey Szymansky.'

Hilton wrote back 'Go to Hell. Casey has no friends.'

Finnegan went in and found a huge young man reading his mail.

"Did you ever do any selling, bugle-nose?" the young man asked him without looking up. "My salesmen aren't persistent enough. They just don't produce."

Finnegan told him about the time he and the dog McGregor had done quite a successful selling job in New York State. Hilary liked the story.

"Here we sell a lot of odd things," Hilary said. "I can sell anything, anything. We buy up every kind of surplus and find a market for it. We have glass that bounces and rubber that shatters. We have enough sheet bronze to start another bronze age. I have four tank cars of sulfuric acid on a siding and I have to sell them before the sun goes down. I have a million gallons of bright green paint. We moved a lot of it by mixing it with sawdust and selling it for artificial lawns. Who would want an artificial lawn? Over ninety thousand peoples so far have taken our minimum of eighteen square feet. Did you come to see me about a selling job, Solli?"

"No."

"I hoped you had. I had word out that I needed another off-beat salesman and you might have been the man. You're an artist, and we do a lot of artwork in our peddling, though not in the sense you might take it. It'd be the artist's mind rather than his hands that I'd want. You'd fit in several ways. But if you didn't come to see me about a selling job, then I don't want to see you at all.

"Naturally I know who you are. We live in a small world. We have more mutual acquaintances than one. Several of them have hung some humorous stories onto you; you're a peg for them. But the only other thing you could have come to see me about is our worthless mutual acquaintance. I don't know why people think that I could do anything about him, or why anyone thinks he's worth saving. You're an alky, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Let's go out for a drink then. One more won't hurt you if you're already dead. I'll tell you a story."

It was still early in the morning.

"It's over a year since it happened," said Hilary when they were settled down, "and this is the first time it ever seemed funny. But Judas Priest it is funny! It just struck me how funny it is, and I'd literally cried over it before.

"It was a snowy night. I got to town late from a trip and I wasn't expected. Your no-good friend Casey was with my no-good wife Mary Jean. I don't know why I didn't kill him. I weigh two hundred and sixty pounds, and I'm the fastest big man you ever saw. I've always believed that I could whip any man in the world, and I've met none to change my view. I could have killed him with my hands, but I didn't.

"I caught him by one heel and jerked him out of bed. He was naked as a plucked duck. I dragged him across the room, through the door, down the stairs, out the front door, through the snow (and it was deep), and into the middle of the road. I left him there and went back into the house.

"It was just midnight and just zero. That is estate country out there, and it was at least two hundred yards to the next house. But Casey didn't go to any of the houses in the region at all; I checked later. I've always wondered how he got out of that one. Lord how I've wondered! For that alone I look forward to the Last Day; I know I'll never know it before then. He's resourceful, but I bet that taxed him. And you know, this is the first time it ever seemed funny. Till now I've just been thankful that I didn't kill him."

"I'm sure he'd rather you had, Hilary. I've no doubt Casey worked it out by the dialectic principle. That can solve anything."

"The action of cold snow on ardor produced a cool feeling towards me. The boy dislikes me to this day, Finnegan, and I do not love him overly.

"I moved out, and in the settlement I gave Mary Jean the house. And Casey moved back in. I guess he's ahead of me after all. I've never gotten over being amazed at it. Why, when she had me, would she want him? Do you understand women?"

"Yes."

"Then you're the only man in the world who does."

"Yes, I know that. I'm unique in several ways, but it doesn't do me any good. I only understand them. I can't cope with them."

"Now and then, when I'm moody, I call him up and scare him liverless. And the next day he always has to go to his doctor for a session."

"Poor Casey."

"I can't understand why you all like him, for he's worthless. And yet I kind of like him myself. That nice Mary Catherine has never given up on him."

"Now all I've got to do, Hilton," said Finn, "is get you to throw him out again and take your wife back. Then we will have one more try at straightening him out. You understand that I have come to this town on this mission at great personal sacrifice. The least you can do is cooperate."

"What personal sacrifice are you referring to?"

"Why, Hilary, I could be back in Basse Terre or St. Kitts, or in Tahiti, or on the Riviera. I am studying to be a playboy and you are holding me up."

"Be back there? Have you been to those places?"

"I'm nearly sure that I've been to one of them. It is such a vivid episode in my life that I'm almost sure that it actually happened."

"I *am* half-tempted to throw him out and take her back. I'd be lying if I said that I didn't want her again. I never did give up on her either. But Oh she is a hellish one! I'm sure she's too much for him. I am too much in the salvage business to write off such a property. How will we do it?"

"The same way as before. Tonight is a good night."

"It's better weather now. He won't freeze to death. But whatever luck saved him the last time might forsake him now. I'll move him out again and move right in. And to Mary Jean I'll give the good tanning that her father always told me I should. Besides, she may see the humor this time and give up the little monster. She always gets jokes the second time they're told her. I think she saw it that last time but was too mad to realize it."

"It will be partly a Finnegan production this time," said Finn, "so naturally it'll be funny. We'll have to add a couple of gadgets."

"But work comes first, Finnegan. We have to peddle four cars of acid and a thousand gross of Little Daisy Pancake Turners. Then we have to drive down to Grundy County to buy a bridge. It's a good bridge. We can cut it up and come out all right. Then we go to Cicero for some Tampa Reefers."

"Cigars?"

"A distressed stock. They're dried out and starting to flake, three hundred thousand, unbranded and unwrapped. If I can get them for a cent and a quarter each I can come out ahead. I'll give them a light coat of tar, and I can wrap and brand and box them for three quarters of a cent, and market them for four cents. Boy, that's a profit of a cent-and-a-half a stogie, damned near five thousand dollars."

"I handle distressed cigars quite a bit. It's better than doubtful canned goods. The most nervous of all is distressed eggs. Never get in a distressed egg deal if you can help it, Finnegan. It just isn't worth the worry at any price."

They sold the sulfuric acid and the Little Daisy Pancake Turners.

They went down to Grundy County and bought the bridge. On the way back they bought the distressed stogies for one and one-eighth cents each.

“You like making money a lot?”

“If I didn't like it I wouldn't do it. When I was in Prep School four of us made a pact. We decided that a man who couldn't make a million dollars before he was thirty wasn't much of a man. We pledged that if any of us wasn't able to pull it off he'd have the decency to kill himself. One of us did kill himself when near this line. It was generally attributed to a scandal, but I think it was due to this failure. He hadn't made a million; he had hardly made half of it.

“One of us, me, made it handily. The other two backed out. One used a lot of inflated statements to make it seem that he had it, but he sure didn't fool me. He just barely has it now, five years later. And the other one tries to laugh it off. He always was the weak sister of our bunch.”

“A lot of people don't care too much about making money.”

“If that were true, and it isn't, I'd be glad, Finnegan. It'd keep the field from being overcrowded. But I think that everyone would like it if he were any good at it. It's common to say that you don't care for something that you're a duffer at. But this business is compelling. I get my hackles up when I'm onto something that's good.

“I've been a big game hunter. But I once did a deal in rotting elephants' hides, and it was more fun. I've bought spoiled bananas and consignments of wormy sesame seed, run-down radio stations, and stranded whales. I once moved a half a million baby alligators in thirteen days. There were those who said it couldn't be done.”

“Is everything in your business distressed, Hilary?”

“Everything that doesn't move through regular channels is distressed. Florida lots, steam power plants, estate close-outs, old hotels, tropical birds, German clay, uncased Swiss movements, private libraries, compromised furs, nervous race horses, high school quarterbacks. I buy and sell nearly everything. I've fixed up three garbage scows and sold them to an Arabian Gulf potentate. Now they are like floating palaces. A deal is hottest just before someone gets burned. Never be the last man on a deal, Finn. But it sure is fun to be the next to last man on a deal and to pull it off. I've sold dragons' teeth from real Chinese dragons. I've even handled Finnegan diamonds. I'd deal direct with you but I know you wouldn't want me to go around your contract. I can move marked money or Navajo pottery.

“There is also a good business in distressed brains. I move a lot of brains in businesses other than my own. I can spot a man with a headful of distressed brains; you're such a man yourself. And oddly I

have deal in Van Ghis. Knowing the origin of them, I understood that the market would always be in short supply.

"My business, you see, is not restrictive. You put your eggs in several baskets. And if they do not sell, you can rotate baskets, and eggs. Or you give away the eggs with the basket, or the basket with the eggs. I have become something of a tycoon. I even deal in distressed tycoons. Now let us go into town and develop our conspiracy."

Hilary Hilton got through a call to the maid at his wife's house and set up a signal system. Then Hilary and Finnegan went to dinner.

"Did you ever have yourself analyzed, Finn?" Hilary asked him.

"Yes. The Shaman read me without too much trouble, and I believe he read me correctly."

"What did he say?"

"Oh, he gave it all to me. He spun it out in fine fashion, and I admired. Then, underestimating my degree of literacy, he gave it to me in layman's terms. He said I was a natural-born bum."

"That's what I thought you were. Sometimes it's hard to tell nowadays. There's a new sort of bum about, a pretty intricate sort. A man is likely to be taken in by them, bums with a touch of genius. Hell, everybody has a touch of genius. You have to admire them though. As a bum, YOU are almost in a class by yourself."

They were joined at dinner by a little skull-headed man named Askandanakandrian. Askandan had some distressed fish sticks that had turned an unhealthy green. Hilary bought the fish sticks from him.

"This time I have the better of you, Hilary," said the odd old man. "How will you market these unhealthy green fish sticks?"

"I will create a fad for green fish sticks. No smorgasbord should be without them."

"What will you do with the fuzz on them?"

"I will present them as aerated fish sticks," Hilary said.

"I have also," Askandan confided, "some unscented soap base. I have eighty-three thousand pounds of it in a boxcar. This does not act like any other soap base. When mixed with water it becomes very sticky and foul, so that other soap, very strong soap, is needed to wash it off. In addition it has a rotten smell. Do you want to buy it?"

"Twenty cents a hundred pounds."

"But that's only a hundred and sixty-six dollars a car load. I paid nearly that much, and I owe sixteen dollars demurrage. What will you do with it?"

"Askandan, I won't tell you that," Hilary insisted. "It would imperil the whole spirit of bargaining. Do you want to sell?"

"No. Not yet. I was just asking."

'I was just asking' was a phrase that Askandanakandrian used

often, for which reason, and the coincidence of his name, he was often called Asking Dan.

Hilary left them then, to go about the details of his reestablishment. And then for several hours Finnegan sat beside Askandan the great little man and imbibed knowledge and a drink made of goats' milk and a wine of the Urals.

Both Askandan and Hilton used the terms distressed and nervous in referring to their merchandise; but Askandan was more of a nervous man and Hilton more of a distressed man. Askandan explained a lot to Finnegan.

"We deal in complex fields with simple processes. We attempt always to bring confusion out of chaos. Less than confusion is too easy and it lets in the lightweight competition and permits any upstart to become a nervous merchandise man. More than chaos is intolerable. It is on the road between that fame and fortune wait.

"In the rehabilitation of nervous merchandise, whether organic or inorganic, there are seven sovereigns. For all dealers they may not be the same sovereigns, but for me they are: One acid, lye, formaldehyde, ammonia, a kaoline affiliate of a nature so secret that I tremble every time someone mentions it lest they understand its importance, amyl acetate, and one of the lesser gums which I will not name. These are the minimum, and they will serve for everything from rescuing nervous fish to nervous furniture. And if I were to be cast on a desert island and told that I had to select only four of them for companions, I think that I would sweat blood over the decision. But after I had sweat the requisite amount of blood, I would take the acid, the base, the clay, and the gum.

"Really nervous merchandise, like the soft fruits, wilted lettuces, turning meats and fishes, and rancid oils, must be trimmed, cooked, frozen, canned, or otherwise processed. Furs and jewelry are in the pseudo-nervous category; they are often moved by our peddlers who fictionize them as hot. I am also known as a weevil man from the miracles I can perform with weevily grain. I am, perhaps, the foremost weevil man in the Chicago area."

Then Askandanakandrian looked at Finnegan oddly and asked:

"When are you going to die, Finnegan?"

"I understood that such things were veiled," Finnegan said nervously. "Are they not also veiled from you?"

"Not entirely. You know that you will be murdered?"

"I have not admitted it to myself. But, yes, I know it."

"There is a special aspect about a man who will be murdered, Finnegan: not a nervousness exactly, but still a difference about him. We all go through that door, but we do not all go in the same manner. You have crossed a man, and he will have you followed and killed.

Who is the man?"

Finnegan told the name of the man to the little Armenian. Then he asked him: "Do you know him? That man and I are both of the other blood, which you wouldn't understand."

"I know him a little," Askandan said, "and I know much more about him. He is the sort of man that anyone of any weight will at least have heard of. And I *do* understand about the other blood. The secluded center of it is now Mr. Ararat in my own Armenia. That old remnant gives a different meaning to the story of the Flood. But I would not have crossed that man, Finnegan. I would not have crossed him for a million dollars."

"It was a slightly larger sum," said Finnegan. But whether this was true or only Finnegan talk is uncertain.

"You are yourself a piece of nervous merchandise," said Askandan. "I believe that I should have reconditioned you myself had I found you earlier. Now I am not sure."

"Is it essential that all merchandise be reconditioned? And that a profit be shown on everything, even souls?" Finnegan asked.

"Yes, it's essential. Even on souls, Finnegan."

"I am a Teras," Finnegan declared. "Have I a soul?"

"I knew you were a Teras," said Askandan who knew everything, "and you *do* have a soul. Is God limited? There is God in you, and you will find It only at your death. What will you say when the Master comes and asks how you have used your ten talents? It amuses me that the Greek and the English words should give such a double meaning to the parable?"

"They are from the same root, and it means To Weigh. So also is Tolerant."

"The Master knows more etymology than you. How will you answer Him?"

"I will tell Him that I still have them jingling in my pocket."

"He will not like that answer."

"No, He will not like that answer."

After this, Finnegan cooked up a fast plot with Askandanakandrian the little old Armenian who could read souls and who was master of all dialects and roles.

5.

"Not again! Oh God, not again!"

It is the one nightmare that is universal to mankind, and it had come to his waking a second time.

Though unencumbered in any way, he was oddly embarrassed and seemed not to know what to do with his hands, which should have been the least of his worries.

There is no other dilemma like this. None. Really, what can a sheer

naked man do when he finds himself in the open and every door locked to him. To need help, and to be more afraid to cry out for it than anything in the world is an unsolvable problem.

There was a rustle. There was someone or something near, and no place to hide. If it were an animal the young man would have skinned it on the spot and worn the hide. If it was a human he could only sink into the road, and the road was very hard.

But when it finally emerged to view he was not sure which it was. It may have been a little bald-headed man or it may have been a gnome or spirit sent to mock him; but it stepped out of the bushes.

"Hey, Mac, you want to buy a suit?" the gnome asked. He may have been a human, there was no way of telling; but he had a garment draped over his arm.

"God yes, nobody ever wanted to buy a suit more than I do."

"Oh, then you have heard of my suits? Old Dan sells fine suits. Let's go down where it's real light and see what a fine suit this is."

"No, no, I don't care how fine it is. And I sure don't want to go down where it's real light. Lord, let me put the thing on here, Lord! Dammit, man, let go the pants."

"You seem nervous. Do I make you nervous? I will go away again if I make you nervous."

"No, no, only hurry and let me put on the suit. Oh for God's sake, old man, let me have the thing!"

"I have never seen a man so anxious to try on a suit. It is testimonial indeed to my wares. This is a suit that not everybody would want to buy. But it is the last suit I have, and when I sell it I can go home."

"What the hell do you think I'm trying to do? Let go, let go, let me put it on fast."

"But not so fast. Permit me to tell you a little about this suit. I will not misrepresent it to you. It is no longer in style. It is what was once called a zoot suit and is now quite rare. The beauty of it is that it will fit anyone, for you cannot tell whether it fits or not. And for only sixty-five dollars."

"The Robber!" though Finnegan who was watching. Finnegan had bought the old suit for nine dollars for the stunt but he began to understand how these men turn a profit on everything.

"Oh my God, man, let me put it on," said Casey, for he was the stitchless young man.

"Sixty-five dollars, cash in advance," said the gnome.

"I don't have it on me right now. I don't have anything on me right now. Let me put on the suit and we will go somewhere and get the money."

"Well, let me have your old suit for security."

"Dammit, man, if I had an old suit I'd put it on. Give me the suit quick."

"You would take it by force? Police! Police!"

"Oh God no! Don't holler. Look, I will kneel to you. I'll beg. I'll grovel. For the love of all humanity let me have that suit."

"Surely you're just trying to have fun with an old man and you don't intend to buy at all. But if you change your mind, come see old Dan tomorrow. Here's my card. Put it in your pocket."

"Pocket? If I had a pocket I'd crawl into it. The suit, old man, the suit."

"Maybe you want a necktie. I have neckties with me also."

"They're better than nothing if you have enough of them. Oh my God, man, give me the suit right now."

"But for credit? And without security? And to one who seems to have, pardon me, no visible assets whatever? That is hardly good business."

"Old man, you don't know how bad I need that suit."

"There is a shortage of suits? Then the price is seventy-five dollars. I cannot afford to give away what is in short supply."

But finally Askandan sold Casey not only the zoot suit but also a pair of pointed shoes and a monstrous hat, all on promise of payment in the morning.

"I do not presently have the jangle chain that should go with this," said Asking Dan, "but I can get you a jangle chain. I will leave no leaf unturned to get you a jangle chain by tomorrow. I like the phrase 'Leave no leaf unturned'. It reminds me of a story about leaves, and an unthinking couple who once found themselves in your present state."

And Askandan disappeared into the bushes again like a gnome.

The very odd figure of Casey started down the road towards town with a new bitterness mixed with the old. The zoot suit was much too small for him and was painful in the crotch. He was a whole catalog of fools, and there was a horrible tension in his throat that threatened to burst into sound.

Then, when the pointed shoes had begun to hurt very badly, and when he had suffered the tortures of the damned for an intolerable time, there was a frightening rasping noise. It scared him; he couldn't place it. It was coming from somewhere very near; it was coming from inside of him.

It was laughter, and it was his own. It had first an hysterical note to it, coming tightly from his throat and chest. Then it broke loose and came from farther down. It became an old country belly laugh. He had forgotten how funny a really bare situation can be. This was rich, and he bellowed and hooted. It was like something out of one of the old *Crocks*.

Casey laughed for the first time in many months, and a lightness came back to him that he had forgotten.

6.

'No, I haven't heard from the brat. But Casey came back from over the hill. Why should we give up on our special boy? I thought he'd be at the ordination. He must be out of the country. I justify him in all ways.

'Didn't you know that Finnegan was Top Sergeant in that outfit, Dotty? They all agree that he was the best man in the outfit, in any outfit. Other men have had the same failings.

'Did you know that one of the Apostles was a tippler? Papa says that it's an old Italian legend. He used to duck back and finish what was left in the cups and wineskins. He was either Thomas or Bartholomew or Jude, Papa forgets which. There were miracles in reverse with wine bottles found filled with water. Yet he was a fine Apostle and he converted his tens of thousands. He never got over an inordinate love for the stuff but he must have brought it under control. Vincent is reading over my shoulder, and he says that inordinate means *not* brought under control. I say 'A long afternoon in Purgatory to you, my love.' I pray to the Holy Apostle the tippler, *Sanctus Apostolus Potator Incognitus*.

'Let there always be more in us than is apparent, Dotty, or we are lost. Did you know that we are period pieces? In twenty years nobody will believe that we happened. You do see what is coming in the name of the Name, don't you, Dotty? And we will become troglodytes.

'Mary was here this morning. She told me a joke so far out that I'm afraid to repeat it. You can look forward to knowing it on the last day.

'Casey says that the Seven Devils came back and found him swept and garnished and want to move in again. He hasn't let them. He is a good boy though badly spoiled. He is, however, in hock to the Seven Devils for a lot of money. They have taken his press and building, but they can't use the name of the *Crock*. There is no *Crock* but the *Crock*, and Casey is the editor of the *Crock* and is being exacerbated (is that a word? It doesn't look like one after I've written it) by the liberals (is that?): they all bleed a little when anyone turns on the Party. Vincent says that we talk too much about Communism. We are occupied by it while a much more dangerous arm of the same octopus advances on us, the secular-liberal tentacle. They are of the same flesh, of course. The Serpent of the Garden (I have this information by special charisma) was this hydra, this eight-armed water monster that is still with us.

'Vincent also says that we are the last young people ever to believe that the Church is perfect. I think so too. I'll hate to see us go.

'My husband says smart things sometimes. Then he does the dumbest things in the world. The last time he was hunting he left his shotgun in a fence corner and came home without it. He says that he *did* seem to be walking a little lighter, but he thought nothing about it till he got home. He would go back to fishing but he forgot who borrowed his rod and reel.

'I was very glad to get to go to the ordination and to see you all again. There's too many years between things! The next time will probably be at my funeral, or yours. Gee I hope it's yours! I bet you'll look pretty in a coffin. Be good. We all love you: how shall I count the ways? Rats, Dotty, it wouldn't take the fingers of one hand. I don't know many ways to love, but all of them are for you.'

Show Boat

Finnegan wrote to Dotty:

'Ruskin (or was it Erskine?) wrote that music is the only language in which it is impossible to say an unkind or something thing. Ruskin (or was it Erskine?) was wrong as usual. There is vindictive music, there is sneaky music, there is derisive music, there is just plain mean music. More unkind things have been

written in jazz than in jargon, which is why unkind people are so taken by it. There is the conceit of the fugue, the arrogance of the operatic, the pride of the pop, the weaseling of the waltz, the whining meanness of the hillbilly, the silliness of swing, the dishonesty of downbeat, the biliousness of the ballad.

'All of which is prelude to the last time I got whipped. I recently had a blank platter made and put on the box at my favorite bistro. I put in ten dollars for it to play noiselessly a hundred times. This caused panic among the unclean hoppers. They twitched, they bled, they sweat, they howled to the management for the key to put an end to the terrible silence. I told them that I had paid for the music, that it was beautiful music and was pitched so that it could be heard only by the human ear. This made them mad. They called me a fink and a scab and a fruit and a fascist. They pummeled me with coke bottles (the unclean hoppers drink nothing stronger) and tore off my shirt, and got me on the floor and kicked me with their pointed shoes; and this after I promised you that I wouldn't fight any more.

'Then they got out their switchblade knives and cut a Z in my cheek. Does the letter Z have a special meaning to music lovers? Then I was arrested for disturbing the peace. The judge said that he would have given me ten years had he the power. He is a buff. I was afraid to ask for a jury trial. I'd have gotten the gas chamber.

'I should not have missed the ordination. It was just that I miscalculated it by some weeks and some thousands of miles. I will make it up to Henry in some manner. I should not have missed writing to you last year. It is the first year I ever missed. It is possible that I will come out of all this. I mean to do something very much for you who have done so much for all the rest.

'I will write to you again soon. Maybe tomorrow. Maybe again the day after. I have always believed that the best way to end a letter is just to stop when you get to the end of a page no matter—' And he stopped there without end or signature.

Mary Virginia Schaeffer wrote to Henry:

'This thing that I want to tell you, it is no use going about it. I could never tell you when we were close and you were my boyfriend, and how could I write what I could not even say? And last month at the Ordination I was the only one who didn't know what to say to you. But I knew that you still understood that we would never be apart. And when you gave me your blessing, you winked at me.

'A long time ago (it seems like a long time) mama used to worry that I had anything to do with you. 'Why, you are the prettiest girl in town,' she'd say (and I was), 'and he is the homeliest man, and he is no good and has been in jail in Beaumont. Why do you want to tempt the Lord? There will always be something between you.' (And there should be.) 'Why do you like the fat Frenchman?' But maybe you would still be mean if I hadn't loved you. When you changed, maybe it was partly I who changed you. And now you are taken by the passion and you will always know what you must do. But you are already saved.

'And the rest of us have it still to do, and we will only be saved as by fire. It is like climbing a hill, and then finding that you are at the bottom of a bigger hill and the ground is sinking. It is like starting a big bird off to fly, and it all comes apart in your hands. And you try to put it together again, and meanwhile the wind has changed, and it seems like real flight is no longer possible.

'Everyone is happy. X-dmo and all that.'

Love, M. V. S.

Mr. X wrote to Absalom Stein:

'We are perhaps the only ones who know what this is about, and I sometimes think that you are not as dedicated as you might be. Duffey is only a toy patriarch who crusades well but is not fitted to work in the dark. Gabrielovitch can only read the poison label if it is printed in Slavic. Henry, by the nature of

his calling, cannot penetrate as deeply as we. Casey, even though he has changed, still has not any more brains than he had before the change, and it is very hard to strike flame from soapstone. The kids, well they are very fine ladies, and they have the Church; they are justified. They are right even when they are wrong. I have it only a little and you not at all. We must hobble without that crutch.

‘Now the point is that you have to be a born joker to be able to stand this. I was born so, and by all the powers so were you! We are Cassandras in pants. We make our revelations, and listen to the cat-calls of the cretins. But not all who mock us disbelieve us. For those who lead the roar against us know that what we say is true. To us remains a certain defense, after the proper defenders have lost interest or gone to sleep. Oh well, we will go on tilting with Principalities and Powers. And yet it is a terrible blow to learn that another one has turned. This last one I can hardly believe.

‘Naturally I know the source of Finnegan’s money, but only God knows the source of Finnegan and myself. Even if I were not deeply involved (and I am) my natural curiosity would not let the question go unanswered. But I will not tell you the story now. Someday I will tell it with fine elaboration, for in several senses it is out of this world. A good story mellows in me like wine till it is ready.

‘There is pride in all of us, Absalom, and it must be broken. We all come to the passion and are shaken by it: Finnegan who goes to his many deaths; Casey who was dead and lives again; Hans and Henry who were born to balanced power and will both be broken to gibbering weakness before they die; Duffey who must find Him Who Is More Than Melchisedech; Vincent who made peace with the world and will find that the world does not keep it; Dotty herself, and the Urchin, and Margaret the bonfire.

‘Do you know what is the Abomination of Desolation spoken of by the Prophets? It is the world that God so loved, becoming trivial and narrow. We will see it. I have heard a sad thing of yourself: that you have read the Teilhard bogus and have not laughed. The everlasting phoniness be upon you, Absalom, the gaping nothingness! Renounce this prostitution of the mind, this adoration of the golden gawk!

‘And you yourself, Absalom, you have seen the burning bush, and you must wander for forty years in the desert. Hey, you’ll be old then. Two things are required of us through it all: that we be intelligent and that we be serene.

‘I will pass through town the same time as the Snow Goose in the fall. I will be the one without feathers.’

Wryly yours,
— X

There was a joke going around town, a most unusual joke. Everyone in New Orleans had started to talk Spanish to Finnegan. Even those who spoke English to him did so with a Spanish accent. Did he suddenly seem Spanish to people? It was mighty rum that he should appear so to everyone, and all at once. Now Finn could talk Spanish as well as anyone, but he had got a little tired of the joke.

Finnegan had a concertina. Is it possible that you didn't know he played it? He rather liked his own music though there was much music that he didn't like. He played in the bars and streets with a shocking lack of dignity. Ignacio had to remonstrate with him. A Yankee shouldn't play in the streets like a Gypsy. Finnegan asked this Helen.

Dotty got a letter from a lawyer in Havana, and told her friends that she was going to take a cruise. "It's the third time I've been sent funds for my fare," she said, "and he has been sending me so much money in between times that I could retire if only I knew what my left hand did with it."

Finnegan was shriven on the feast of St. Henry Emperor for his death, if it should come; and thereafter he drank only a little wine. "This hundredth sheep has had a far go of it," he said, "but he made the rest of them look good."

Niccolo Crotolus, the old left-footed killer, sat and talked business with a minor police person with whom he always cleared matters when in town. Niccolo was a large and shapeless man who rattled when he walked due to the number of objects that he carried loose in his pockets, and his lumbering motions. For this reason, it is possible that Crotolus was a nickname, Nick the Rattle. This may have been further connected by his learned employers with his other nickname, for the *Crotalus cerastes* is the Sidewinder, a rattlesnake. Niccolo himself gave another version:

Dotty came to the end of her voyage. There had been attentive boyfriends, and she was flattered and nearly happy. And she remembered what either Raleigh had written or Finnegan had said, that whoever knows only the land knows only half the world and is only half a person.

There is an advantage in very old and mutilated writings: they are improved by the mutilation. It is the first and the last sheepskins that are always lost or worn. There is no story that is not improved by having its first and last pages lost.

Chapter Eleven

Crotolo or Dorotea

1.

They had changed the town. He couldn't find any of the old bars or the Pelican Press. It was possible that New Orleans had recently been ceded to Mexico. He had not been reading the papers. All the signs were printed in Spanish. This was either carrying a city-wide joke on him to great lengths or there had been political changes.

"What's wrong with old New Orleans?" he asked a man who was solicitous of him.

“What time the boat to New Orleans? The boat it has gone already. *No mas antes de martes*. You understand? Not another one till Tuesday.”

“I understand, and yet I do not. Not knowing what day this is, I do not know when, if ever, Tuesday will be. Nor why I should take a boat to get to where I already am.”

He went to call Dotty, but the exchanges had been changed. The only phonebook was an old one from Havana, Cuba that someone had left in the booth.

Finnegan's friend was named Ignacio. Ignacio was an *Abogado*. Everyone in town was either an *abogado* or a *medico* or a *catedratico*, very professional people.

“I notice another thing,” Finnegan told his friend. “The people are getting bluer.”

“Bluer? *Mas de azul*? Are you sure that ‘bluer’ is the word you want?”

“Yes. A layman might say ‘darker’; but, were I working on canvas now, I would touch the blue just a little more to indicate these newfound complexions. There is no doubt that the people are getting bluer. And, though I find the new darkness or blueness attractive, yet I wonder at it. It is not the face of the New Orleans that I know. The complexion of a whole city does not commonly darken suddenly. Do you think that they are all victims of an epidemic and I am the only one who has noticed it? Should we notify the authorities?”

“I doubt it, Finnegan. The authorities, I am sad to say, have already been appraised of your activities. And, though they are taking a friendly view so far, yet I wouldn't bother them with the story of an epidemic. They might consider you an epidemic of one.”

“That's clever, an epidemic of one. I say lots of clever things myself. Why does everyone here talk Spanish this week?”

“All are not polyglot as you and I. Many have no other tongue. You are a charming kidder. You are the nicest drunkard I have ever known.”

It was late in the evening, and evening did not begin till after midnight. Ignacio the *abogado* took occasion to lecture Finnegan:

“As faithful, though not at the moment intense, children of Holy Mother the Church, we know that our temptations are of three sources: the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. The Flesh is for those who are weaker than we, the Devil for those less fastidious of their company. For you and me the World is our temptation, as it is our habitation and our home. It is so glorious to be alive in so fine a World, that our temptation is to live over-gloriously, especially as to the cup. I speak, of course, of such noble persons as ourselves. Lesser people have lesser temptations.”

“The World we have always with us. There is only one way out,” said Finn.

“There was one who took an alternate way from the World,” said Igancio.

“Let's leave Elias out of this,” Finnegan protested.

“It is not he of whom I speak. There is an authentic story of a man in the eighth century. It has gone unnoticed even by the curious, or been treated as a silly legend by the serious. This I do not understand. It was chronicled by the great Bishop—*mas—arzobispo*—Turpin of Rheims, one of the peers of Charlemagne, in what may have been the noon-time of the World. Now the man who left the World and its temptations by an alternate route was a holy Benedictine Priest named Joseph of Mainz. Father Joseph was faced with the same moral problem that faces us: that of living in a World too lovely and too treacherous, or leaving it without defying the ban on self-destruction. But Father Joseph was the wisest man in the eighth decade of the eighth century when so much was known that is now forgotten.

“He forged a great tube of copper and iron, and lined it with glass cast at a heat equal to the sun's. Then he rammed it with twenty Frankish tons of white powder. Atop this he loaded a spherical chamber that he had fashioned for himself. Into this he put the Holy Missal and the Scriptures, the writings of the great Augustine and Jerome, and the *Natural History* of Pliny. He put in bread and wine and an altar stone, and grape cuttings and wheat so he could celebrate the mass. After this, he shot himself to the moon, the first man as far as we know ever to do so. He lived there for ninety years in a condition of great sanctity. This we know, for he said that for as long as he lived he would on the night of every full moon build a bonfire so that the world could see that he was still alive. After ninety years, it was no longer seen, and has not been seen again till this day. The story has been doubted by the doubters. For my part I believe it on the authority of the holy Bishop. And yet I would not so leave the world if I could. I love it too much.”

“It is said that it will soon be left in that way again,” Finnegan remarked.

“Yes, but those who say it are the very ones who say that it is impossible that it could have been left in that way before. The inconsistency of men of science amazes me, and I am sure that it amazes others.”

“For my part,” said Finnegan, “I want to leave the World only for St. Kitts which I have set in my mind as a terrestrial paradise. I am in love with this place to which I may or may not already have been.”

“Then for the love of St. Jack go! You are a man of evident though mysterious means. A boat goes every Thursday, and irregular boats

also leave irregularly.”

“I possibly have a different idea as to where St. Kitts is than the shipping companies do, Ignacio.”

“St. Kitts, which is St. Christopher, was a land-fall of our great father Cristóbal Colón. As such it is a holy island, though presently under the dominion of our separated brothers. It is one of the group of five little Islands, the Leewards.”

“Five little islands, the magic number,” Finnegan said. “Did you know that in every pentanesia there is a rogue island?”

“I hadn't known it was a universal rule. In this case it's true. Barbuda Island is good for nothing.”

“Barbuda, my brother! But surely it is good for something.”

“No. Nothing at all in this world.”

“Oh well, I guess not then.”

“It is odd that you should be interested in St. Kitts, for I am so myself. It is as unusual a little island as is in the Indies.”

2.

It was a minor mystery that Ignacio should call him a Yankee. Finnegan had never knowingly passed himself as a Green Mountain Boy, nor as a dealer in nervous wooden nutmegs. He did not twang when he talked, nor had he the Bostonian affliction of speech. He was not stingy, he was not mean, he was in no way narrow or provincial. He had no bad habits but his obvious one. Why should he be taken for a Yankee?

Elena went with the concertina. He had bought it from her, but she wanted to go along and keep an eye on it. She may have intended to repossess it if he ever tired of it or cast it aside.

“How did you happen to come to New Orleans?”

“The only time I come I play for a week only,” she said. “I play in three bars on as many nights but I am not a success. They want me to take my clothes off to my music while I play. This is not only silly and immoral; it is also impossible. It takes all the hands and fingers one can muster to play the instrument. This town here is raw, as any poor girl who plays will know, but it is better than New Orleans.”

Elena, like the rest of them, was in on the joke of pretending that the town was now no longer New Orleans, but had some other name. Finnegan played ‘A Tavern in a Town’, and ‘I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now’. He played the ‘Peanut Vender’ and the ‘St. James Infirmary Blues’.

That night there were some Yankees indeed who came into a place where he was playing. They talked pidgeon Spanish to Finnegan as though he were a barefoot Latino and not a man of means. He would not play for them and they were rude to each other. And after the fight, Elena took Finnegan to his room and put in a call for Ignacio.

“We will have to get a guardian for you,” she said. “We cannot watch you all the time. The *abogado* has been in touch with your friends and with your girlfriend, and has been trying to get some of them to come down here.”

“I try to call Dotty every day, but the exchanges have been changed. If Dotty wants to see me she can take a taxi and come down. I have a brother who drives a taxi in this town, but we never see each other because we are incompatible. I have a sister whom I love, and even we are a little compatible. Are you also incompatible, Elena?”

“Not very. I can see how you would be easy to be incompatible with though.”

Finnegan lay on the sofa and played and sang a tune of his own making while Elena bathed his brow and washed the blood off his snoot:

‘We’ll play us a tune that will never grow old
Though we are marooned on the Main.
Elena has bracelets and jangles of gold
That sound like the Tambuls of Spain.’

“You are such a nice boy, it’s a shame you are always crocked,” Elena said. “Have you had troubles? Do you love one who is unattainable? Are you frustrated in the expression of your talents? Did one you loved greatly die tragically and young? Are you disillusioned by the perfidies of the governments and shapers? Are you dangerously fallen from grace? Are you look for a *Paraíso*? Have you neglected one and are ashamed? Are you in chemical unbalance? For these reasons you drink?”

“*Nueve y uno*,” Finnegan said. “Nine yesses and a no. I drink because it is good to drink, and I drink excessively because I have an evil streak.”

“Can’t you stop?”

“Anyone can stop at any time. It is as easy as hacking off your hand or plucking out your eye, the matter of a moment. It is better to be maimed than to burn: but it IS a maiming; being weak, I hesitate.” Then Finnegan sang another bit of his far-away song:

‘And now we will weigh it and hang out three sheets,
And then we will do it up brown,
For someone has changed all the names of the streets
And someone has scuttled the town.’

“The poem would be better without the words, and conversely,” said Elena. “Now I write a letter to your Dorotea. What do I say?”

But Finnegan was still singing:

‘*Alados navíos arriban del mar;
Los miro al mismo un rey.
Ninguno, apenas, a mi es tocar;
Lo pido el hondo porque.*’

“I write: Dear Dorotea,” Elena recited. “Winged ships come from the sea and I look at them like a king. Not one of them, hardly,

pertains to me. I ask thereon the deep 'Why?' or perhaps the 'Why not?' Have you no care that you set Spanish grammar back a thousand years?"

"None, Elena. Why, there's grown men who can't put Spanish into anapest good when they're drunk. Hey, get this one:

'The Ocean is faded, the salt is all gone,
The wind and the waves go to rest.
The parakeets bark and the dogs sing at dawn
And the sun comes up out of the West.' "

"Dear Dotty," Elena wrote out loud. "The salt has lost its savor, and without you the sea is not as blue as it was. The whole world is awry and a weirdness is on the land. What else shall I write?"

'The island is empty, there's no one but me,
The shouting is down to a hum;
And maybe you'll come like a cloud from the sea,
And maybe you never will come,' Finnegan played and sang.

"Dorotea, there is a quietness and desolation on the ocean and islands," Elena interpreted and wrote, "and only the imminence of your advent, questionable though it be, can ever fill the void. What else shall I write?"

'Like Omar my glory is drowned in a cup
But Omar was only a clown.
They say when you're down there is no way but up,
But it may be they've never been down.'

"Like the Persian bard I have looked upon the wine when it is red, and now I doubt me that this is the darkness just before dawn or will it get darker yet. What else?"

'The terns have gone down and the squids they have curled;
The fish are asleep in the sea;
And I am alone in a littoral world,
And you could be lonely with me.'

"The sea-birds have gone to rest and the squids relaxed for the night, and all the fish are asleep. I am alone on a shore with a sadness that I invite you to share with me. Is this Dotty such an *angela*?"

"*Una angela verdad*, Elena. She has thick ankles, her only fault. And in Paradise even this defect will disappear."

"Shall I write something about her ankles, how maybe they will be better when we are all sanctified?"

"It would be hard to express without giving the wrong idea."

But later, after Ignacio had come, Finnegan began to worry about a letter he had recently received. It was written in the rambling hand and in the alternate large and small letters of one who was drinking. But its message was plain. It told Finnegan that a decision had been made and his life would be required of him. How Finnegan crossed this man is of another story. But how that man struck back is of this one.

"This man, he kills effectively?" Ignacio asked.

"He is not invincible. But I am not invulnerable."

"The letter, you see, did not come direct but has been forwarded."

"Why, it was mailed right here in New Orleans."

"I am out of patience with you, Mr. Solli. You are not in New Orleans and there is no sense in being stubborn about it. This was written to frighten you and to make you break cover. So it is the hounds who are nervous, and not the hare."

"This little hare is a little nervous," Finnegan said. "But it will not come suddenly. He isn't a hasty man."

3.

"I should think you would be out of patience with Finnegan," Mrs. Duffey said.

"I have a lot more patience now that he has a lot more money," Dotty said reasonably. "That was very culpable of me. He signed his last letter 'culpably yours.' And nobody ever offered me a vacation before."

"Then take me along for chaperone," Mrs. Duffey suggested.

"John and I, for reasons not understood even by ourselves, do not need a chaperone," Dotty explained. "Now I am going down there, and you can think anything you like."

4.

In those latter days Finnegan rose early and went to mass. Then he'd walk miles through the streets and roads and around the rocks to the clear beach. He carried sketching paper and books. He read Father Farrell's books on the *Summa*; and St. John of the Cross.

"Why, this is the fleece itself," he cried. "How have I not known it?"

He sketched the faces of his friends. He drew Show Boat whom he loved, and Dotty whom he loved, and Anastasia from another life whom he loved and who was dead; and Mary Catherine and Mary Schaeffer and Marie and Maurine and Patti and Doll Delancy and dark Francine. And Vincent and Henry and Hans and Casey; and Duffey and Stein and Hilary and the Goat Man. He tried to draw X but the face would not come; he drew a Piedmontese X for him. He drew one other, Saxon Seaworthy. 'But he is not my friend.' 'Why is he not my friend?' 'He is going to have me killed.' 'And for this we cannot be friends?'

He drew both the faces of Papadiabolous the Devil. He drew Le Marin, and Freddy Castle and Tom Shire. He drew Don Lewis, and Don Barnaby the Duke of Moule; and wondered how deep a secret was there. He limned Loy Larkin who was a pink cloud. He sketched Doppio di Pinne who was his own double or fetch, who had died in his place either in the cabin of the *Brunhilde* at the hands of Papadiabolous or later on Galveston Island in a trap of Saxon

Seaworthy.

Finnegan looked at his pictures, and he knew that certain pairs of them were the same persons. Teresa Piccone was the same person as Anastasia Demetriades, however unlikely it seemed. Casey and Stein were aspects of the same person: no wonder they were both split wide open! Elena was both herself and Angela Cosquin (forgive us, you have not met Angela, and it grows late). Private Gregory back in Ward Fourteen was the same person as Papadiabolous the Devil, and this was the hardest of all of them for Finnegan to accept.

5.

“Crotolo is our family name, and it means a castanet. It is an old word and it is gone, and *castagnetta*, the new word, means a little chestnut. We were called Crotolo because we were a family of dancers and musicians, Zingaro (Gitano, you would say). The Niccolo I have from our astute Florentine father whom in mind I resemble. You recall his discourse on the way in which a Prince must keep faith?”

“Him I have not read,” said the minor police person.

“That it is not necessary that the Prince have the quality, but only that he seem to have it. Now, perhaps, it is the same with the Delegate: it is not necessary that I follow instructions, but that I seem to follow them. For the ‘Prince’ has now changed his mind five times. ‘Wait two days and then dispatch him’ he wired. And then ‘Hold until you hear from me.’ Then again ‘Do it at once and have it done with.’ And immediately afterwards ‘If you have not done it, do not do it; maybe we should not kill him at all.’ Then ‘Kill him, kill him!’ And finally ‘Delay a little.’ Should I not pretend that I have not received this last wire? By arrangement, I get only half pay when a job is called off on the theory that I have run no danger, that I have been on a pleasant vacation. By the same count, your *soborno* is only half if it is not done.”

“Then by all means kill him. A message like this could easily have gone astray. Or you may tomorrow have a new note ordering you to go ahead. And there is no great wrong to have anticipated an order. Does *he* suspect?”

“He knows for sure. He looked me in the eye and grinned and he knew that I was the executioner. But he would not drink with me, not even for the gesture. ‘No more until I drink it new,’ he said. I wonder if they have it in the Kingdom?”

“Wine only, I believe, and rum for the Islanders. But that is speculation; I do not know.”

“There was originally the *piccola vendetta* and the *grande vendetta*, the little revenge and the great revenge. This was when there were more in the business than there are now. For the *piccola*, one was assassinated when probably or possibly in the state of grace, and

sometimes was even given the chance to attain that state. For the *grande*, one was killed when almost certainly not in that state. The rates were several times higher for the *grande* than for the *piccola*. There was much fraud in this. Often one collected for the *grande* but effected only the *piccola*, insured death but not necessarily damnation for the victim. But there was never such deception in our family. What we collected for we effected.

"Now the distinction is about gone. The employers no longer believe in either grace or damnation. I hadn't heard the terms for many years, since I was a boy in the old country. But in his last instructions my employer specified that it must be only the *piccola*. I was not sorry. I do not mix sentiment with business, but I have grown fond of the boy while I followed him. It will surely be the *piccola*. He is quite ready to die."

"Tomorrow then, when he is past the rocks, and to the beach in the afternoon."

6.

It was early Wednesday morning, the same as the Fourth Morning of the World when God had already made the ocean and let it roll all night and now was ready to place the sun in its course. And He hung it fifteen degrees up in the sky and let it start from there, just above the morning cloud bank.

Now it was just as it had been in the beginning. The same fragrant coffee was mixed with the land smell (the coffee tree had been made on the Third Day), and the cup was like the first cup that was ever brewed.

Dotty had coffee and rolls and then phoned the *abogado*. He came to her and they went to Finnegan's rooms, but he had already left them. Dotty got a map of the City and its environs, and Ignacio traced on it the miles-long route of Finnegan's daily walks. Then, after Ignacio had told her other things, she bought a pistol and started out.

Now it was afternoon, and Finnegan was again on the beach beyond the rocks. This was a terminus, and the difficulty was to tell if it was the beginning or the end. This was either the last day of his life or (in a way) the first. If it were followed by another day, then plainly it was not the last. If it were not so followed, then just as plainly it was.

There were sea-birds diving for fish and taking them away; and there were small crawlers going in and out of sand holes. For some it was their last afternoon. Others would still be here tomorrow. The best way was to come early and leave before dark. That way you could watch the struggle of the water and the strand and not know how it ended.

Dotty had a curious pistol. It was a .38 mounted on a .45 frame,

and was probably a nine shot. She wandered the hills in search of either of two men. She had learned about the impending disaster from Ignacio and was on a manhunt. Also a person given to premonitions, she knew approximately the time and place of it.

When she circled back once on her way she saw the car of Nick the Rattle, and it had not been there before. To immobilize it, she slashed the tires. This isn't a simple thing to do. To tell about it sounds easy, but a very strong girl with a very sharp knife did it with difficulty. Only one of the four blew out as she let them down.

Then she fired the little gun out over the rocks to see if she could make her prey break cover. But it made less noise than the tire that had blown, and she could see no motion below. She took the trail of the left-footed heavy man that any child could follow. And as soon as she saw him she was already in range and she shot.

The Sidewinder, when hit, coils laterally, and strikes with the same motion. The moment Niccolo hit the sand he show twice. Finnegan, now seen to be between Dotty and Nick, was hit. And Dotty was hit. And Nick the Rattle had certainly been hit when he went down. Nick was using a weapon greater than a carbine and less than a rifle.

Finnegan had always admired Dotty in times of crisis. Not that this was a crisis. In a crisis there should be a change of attitude. The attitudes of none of them were going to be changed by the shooting.

Dotty shot again, and the Sidewinder writhed in pain, then shot back twice rapidly, and again got home. This was exceptional shooting, six shots between them and not a miss.

A little cloud went over the sun, and people were coming from a great distance.

You had to admire Dotty's stability. A lot of girls would have gone down from that second shot. It hurt her. Finnegan couldn't get up himself. If he had been up, the second shot to hit him would certainly have felled him. The Sidewinder had gotten them much better the second time than the first when he was hurried.

Finnegan was chilly. It was as he had been told in his army days; when you are shot at and missed it makes you hot; but when you are hit it makes you chilly and weak.

Nick the Rattle was gut-shot and sick. But he had not been winged right and could still shoot. If Dotty had known that he shot left-handed she would have had him the first time before he hit the sand. It was funny that she didn't know that Nick shot left-handed. But it was also funny that she even knew there was a Nick the Rattle.

Dotty shot with crossed wrists and the pistol nearly at arm's length. She shot again. And the Rattle bounced around on the ground and returned the fire on both his targets effectively. This was really outstanding shooting: seven, eight, nine shots, and still neither of

them had missed.

7.

A story should begin in the middle of the morning. And end in the afternoon quite a while before it gets dark.

Melchisedech Duffey himself came into the Rounders' Club then. And all of the people were so amused and bemused by the Duffeys that nobody noticed him immediately.

Three of the wonderful lady Duffeys especially were there. They had met and recognized each other only that evening and now they were the closest of friends for ever and a day. Since there was nothing at all prosaic about any of the three, they must be presented in poetry. They were:

After a bit all of the Duffeys drifted out. There were other clubs to conquer in St. Louis and other people to meet. Duffey drifted out with one faction of the Duffeys.

Melchisedech Duffey was up quite early the next morning, and he entered the Broadway Oyster House where there was said to be something going on at all hours. A big-nosed kid was sitting at a big table by himself, and at that moment he called out in a damnable accent and a loud voice "One hundred oysters please." Such an order would have raised eyebrows in many eating places but not in the Broadway Oyster House.

It was likely on the day following hundred-oyster-day that Finnegan and Teresa finally met in the flesh. This was insisted upon and arranged by Monica Stranahan.

Vincent Stranahan was to marry Teresa Piccone on the first Saturday of May of that year. Melchisedech Duffey didn't know either of them. He almost didn't know anybody who knew either of them. But his 'creatures' the Duffeys seemed to have minds of their own. They had a strange homing instinct (had Duffey given it to them, or had it been otherwise generated?) to be in St. Louis for that event.

'Why haven't we seen hide nor hair of this world?' somebody asks.

Because you're on the inside of it and the hide and hair are on the outside.

Anamnesis

Keroul, keroul, the dogs do growl,
The Duffeys are in Saint Lou.
They catch the eye, and none knows why.
Their humor's a little bit blue.

The Duffeys so far were one day wonders in St. Louis. They were a jingling novelty who were everywhere, and Duffey's jokes were all around the town. Most of the Duffeys were in the Rounders' Club that first evening, and they had about taken it over without a shot being fired, except by that loud cap pistol that Marie Schultz had. No, that noise that Dotty Yekouris was making wasn't shots; it was firecrackers, real big ones, that she was lighting and throwing about at random. Doesn't everyone love the acrid hot smell of big firecrackers!

The Duffeys seemed quite a bit overdone. Their colors were a bit too garish. They were too loud, they were too big, they were too intelligent. Those four excesses taken together come very near to spelling out bad manners. Very near but not quite. For the name of their game was 'fun'. When Marie swept through the big rooms of the Rounders' Club, firing her pistol and carrying her husband Hans a-riding on her shoulders, everybody in Rounders' understood that it was fun. Things like this were much more common in Rounders' than in other clubs. Now the young lady customers there began to give their boyfriends rides on their backs and shoulders and to claim that this made them Duffeys too, whatever Duffeys were.

Well, if Melchisedech made them, why were they so damnably overdone? Because everything that Melchisedech did was damnably overdone. One of the most overdone of the Duffeys was Absalom Stein.

The Absalom, surnamed the Stein,
Was full of purple fire.
In some more ancient life he's been
Great Hiram King of Tyre.

Well that was true. In a former life Absalom had been King of Tyre, or even in the on-going present life. But what was he doing this evening? He was sitting on the lap of a middle-aged school teacher, and she seemed quite pleased about it.

Some of the Duffeys had never seen each other before, and most of them had never seen their supposed maker Melchisedech Duffey. But they quickly guessed each others' identities and cried out in delight the names they had never heard before. It was magic, sheer magic, Duffey magic.

Did the Duffeys know that they were grotesquely overdone? Some did, some didn't, some suspected it, but it wouldn't have made any

difference. The name of the game would always be 'fun' for them, and it didn't matter much whether they were overdone or not.

One thing about Hans Schultz, he was always active.

Hans Schultz had been a lot of things
The Orpheus (sometimes shown with wings),
Apollo, with a lyre that sings
The Faust, whose dong the Devil dings,
But now, tonight, what 'tis he slings?

Oh, Hans had just been seized with a wild urge for a tallish, slim slightly boney girl, with a tallish and slim smile on her face, who was standing in the center of one of the big rooms. He believed that this girl, like himself, was a Duffey, but he couldn't guess which one and he was good at guessing. Probably he had never even heard her name, but that was no reason for not being able to guess it, with a little bit of Duffey magic. Anyhow, if she were a Duffey, he'd treat her as a Duffey.

He came up behind the tallish girl and vaulted onto her shoulders. That should have jarred her but it didn't. Well dammit, she should have pretended that it jarred her, but she didn't.

"This is as good an introduction as any, Hans," she said. "I guessed you without too much trouble, though I had never heard of you. I also guessed your beautiful wife, Marie. I am Mary Catherine Carruthers from Chicago, supposedly Casey's girlfriend, and Show Boat Piccone invited me down to this strange conclave. You were rather well known as a girl rider when you were Orpheus, were you not? Will you know Duffey when you see him? Is Finnegan here yet? I dreamed of him last night, so I know that I'll recognize him when I see him. Don't you think it's rather magic the way we Duffeys recognize each other, even those we've never seen or heard of before? Do you want me to turn this into a truly electrifying ride and give you an experience you've never had? I can, you know. Or do you not realize yet what sort of creature I am?"

"I'm pretty sure I'll know Duffey when I see him, yes. And it is all rather magic. Finnegan isn't here yet, but he's supposed to be in town sometime tonight. No, do not give me a truly electrifying experience such as I've never had before. You're already ahead of me. You spoiled my surprise and took the wind out of my sails. No, I guess I don't know what sort of a creature you are, if you put it that way. What are you?"

"I'm a nymph, an Oread Hipparion, an Oread Pony, one to be ridden."

"Who told you that you were?"

"Duffey told me. He recognized what I was when I was nine years old."

"But they aren't creatures of Duffey, they're of another recension."

"Some are, some aren't. I'm both. I'm a Duffey creature, and I'm also such a nymph. I am a creature of Duffey, and I am also a Mountain Nymph, one to be ridden. At first thought it seems slightly grotesque that the great heroes should ride on the shoulders of such slight girls, of such slight nymphs. But then it seems something elegant, something of so magical a luxury that it takes the breath away."

"I remember, I remember," Hans said dreamily, and he slid off Mary Catherine's shoulders.

"Oh Hans, I promise to be totally surprised when you do it again," she said. "And I promise to fill your sails with wind again. And I will find a way to unbruise your ego. I promise. I believe that all of us Duffeys will now be totally in love with each other. It has to be."

"Yes, totally in love with each other," Hans said. He kissed her tenderly and left.

Dotty Yekouris of New Orleans.

Oh Dotty Y is droll and wry.

She walks with swing and trist.

She grins a lot, she turns you hot.

Her eyes are amethyst.

And Marie Monahan Schultz of St. Louis.

Marie instead has hair of red.

She's something of a stunt.

Oh how she'll stand you on your head!

She knows things that you dunt.

And Mary Virginia Schaeffer of Galveston.

Oh Mary V is quite serene.

She's happy and she's handy.

She's half as sweet as saccharine,

And twice as sweet as candy.

The originals of all these verses exist in old Chaldee which has a more intricate rime scheme, but we lack the scholarship to transliterate them. But it happened that it was this Mary Virginia who sensed the presence of Duffey in Rounders' and announced it with happy words.

"Oh, you come to us like a ghost and we hardly knew you," this gentle lady said, but the chandeliers quivered from the sound of her gentle voice. "Oh, bring bread and wine, people, this is the Duffey himself, the Melchisedech!"

Time stood still then as the overly colorful and fun-loving Duffeys gathered around Melchisedech the high Magus who, they were all convinced, had at least a left hand in their own making. It was like lightning dancing between Duffey and the Duffeys. Outside of time there is no duration, 'tis said; no duration, but only a moment. But what a wonderful moment it was! Melchisedech knew all of them, and they all knew him with a knowledge from ancient days.

Then time began again in Rounders' Club. The band played 'The

King Shall Ride', and an ample smiling lady came and swung Melchisedech Duffey up onto her shoulders and carried him through all the rooms of Rounders' and back again. The Duffeys gathered around her after Duffey was on his own feet on the floor again.

"Who are you, who are you?" they demanded. "How could you do that and we not know who you are?"

"I am a St. Louis lady and my name is Lucille Sisler," she said. "And I came to work at the Rounders' Club when the club itself was only eleven days old. And I've worked in this pleasant place ever since."

"But who are you really?" Mary Virginia asked. "Who are you in legend? Who are you in myth?"

"So far as I know I have never been in either of those things, pretty Mary Virginia," she said. "Should I have been?"

"Of course you should have been," Hans Schultz explained to her. "Nobody can be in life who has not been in legend and myth first. That is a requirement of being born."

"I will have to plead innocence then," Lucille said. "I didn't mean to take any shortcuts to being born. How will I find out what my name was in legend or myth?"

"Oh, we'll find it out for you, Lucille," Absalom Stein told her. "Your true name is buried in your unconscious and in your dream life. How is your dream life?"

"It's bountiful to the point of overflowing. It's powerful, and it's mostly pleasant. My days are mostly devoted to delightful retrospect of my dreams of the night before. When I work in this pleasant club more than half of my brain is enraptured by my dreams."

"This will be easier than I thought," Absalom told her. "I'll meet you in one of your dreams just about an hour before dawn in the morning. That's when I dream most rampantly."

"So do I. I'll meet you in one of my dreams then, if you wish. But how will that give me my 'true' name?"

"Oh, I'll ask you what it is. And you'll tell me. All inhibitions will be down then. You'll remember your real name and you'll tell me."

"Thank you, Mr. Stein."

And he returned about midnight with another group of people. These were Charley Murray who was co-owner with Duffey of the wonderful Rounders' Club, and his sister Monica Murray Stranahan and her husband Patrick Stranahan. Patrick and Monica were the parents of Vincent Stranahan who in just four more days (in just three more days if midnight had already struck) would marry Teresa 'Show Boat' Piccone.

"Is our son Vincent on the premises?" Patrick asked one of the old faithful retainers of whom Rounders' was always full.

"No, I'm sure he's not," the old faithful retainer said. "He's out on the town with some of those Duffeys of whom the city is full."

"It's his bachelor week. I don't know where that custom ever originated. The groom isn't supposed to see the bride-to-be for these several days before the wedding."

"Oh, they keep to it pretty well," the old retainer said. "In the day that is ending, the two of them have had only three dates here. They have a rather secluded alcove where they meet. Nobody except everybody knows when they are here together. The barely audible enchanting giggling of Show Boat is what gives them away. I'm told by one who travels a lot that it retains its barely audible quality all the way to Heaven. I hear the faintness of it right now, and I guess that she is still several blocks away."

"Yes, she's on her way here with her father. Send them up to the thrice-special upstairs dining room when they come."

Duffey and Charley and Monica and Patrick went up to the thrice-special room which was triply luxurious even by Rounders' Club standards.

"Why yes, I can hear her giggling now. She's only two blocks away," Monica said. "Brace yourself, Duffey. She is the most wonderful of all your creations and you have never seen her. I first saw the gamin when she was ten years old, and I haven't stopped shaking yet, shaking with delight and awe mixed in equal quantities."

"It's like an earthquake, quite low on the scale but determined to shake things up a little bit," Duffey spoke, and his own face showed delight and awe in equal quantities. Then, all the doors and windows being closed as it says in scripture, the earthquake named Teresa and her father Papa Piccone stood in the midst of them. Or so it seemed; but in reality both doors to the thrice-special room now stood open (could Teresa and her father have come through both of them?) and the five windows on the east side of the room, those that now looked out on night-time St. Louis, had their shutters thrown open and banging in the wind. "But there isn't any wind tonight," Duffey said.

"I am the wind," Teresa said. "I am your number one fan, Duffey, so I claim proprietorship of a sort. We Duffeys have a saying that God made Melchisedech Duffey and Duffey made the Duffeys. And you made us well, Duffey, though people say that we're overdone, and I most of all. But we're supposed to be overdone. I can't fault your handiwork at all. But God's handiwork in you sure falls short. Come over here and sit in this chair and I'll see what I can do to fix things."

"God, God, listen to me. You've done a terrible job on Melchisedech Duffey. God, God, tell those people to come back tomorrow. This is more important. Look at how you've botched this good man. I've seen worn-out shoes that looked better than him."

“God hears her, Duffey,” Monica Stranahan said. “Why, you're quite a bit better looking already.”

“Somebody bring me a looking glass,” Duffey said. “I want to watch God's work in action.”

Papa Piccone pulled a mirror out of his pocket. That old showman could pull almost anything out of one of his pockets. He brought the mirror to Duffey. Duffey looked into it and it shattered into a thousand pieces. (That part is true. Everybody saw it.)

(That part is not quite true. People didn't exactly see it shatter into a thousand pieces. It shattered into only thirteen pieces. It was a trick mirror that old showman Piccone had and it shattered into only thirteen pieces. And these thirteen pieces fit together again easily.)

Nevertheless, Duffey was getting better-looking by the moment. Everybody could see that. “That's wonderful, God,” Teresa chortled. “Did anybody ever tell you how wonderful you really are? Don't overdo it though. He's conceited enough as it is. Can you back it up just a little bit? Oh, that's perfect. Cut it off right there. Thank you.”

Why yes, Duffey was quite a bit better looking than he had been. He still looked like a worn-out shoe, it's true, but it must have been an incomparably better shoe that was now somewhat worn and scuffed. And it wasn't worn clear out. And Teresa was a genuine saint (lots of people had guessed this of her) and she had always been on quite familiar terms with God.

Nobody could adequately describe Teresa. She was sunburned quicksilver. She was fire and ice and holy wine. One description says that she was ‘dark and lithe and probably little’. So she may have been once, for about three seconds. When she had acts at her father's old STAR AND GARTER Vaudeville Theatre she had an act where she could go behind a screen and change clothes and appearance and size and voice and everything else in three seconds, and do it again and again.

But she was a Blue Moon person, a One in a Million Person. She was Duffey's Masterpiece. She was also one of God's Masterpieces. At the fabulous midnight supper there, Duffey had eyes only for Teresa, although he talked wittily with other persons at the supper without noticing that he did. Other voices, strange and mysterious, were adding interest to the conversations, but remember that both Teresa and her father were ventriloquists.

Then Teresa took Duffey into a little room off that thrice-special upstairs dining room. There she hypnotized, or otherwise occultly influenced Duffey, to sit on her lap, and she fondled him and kissed him.

“Wait, wait!” he cried out after a long while. “I shouldn't be doing this. You're a saint.”

"Of course I am," she laughed. "Guys who never sat on a girl-saint's lap don't know what a really good lap is. Did you ever sit on a lady-saint's lap or have a lady-saint give you a piggy-back ride?"

"Yes to both questions," Duffey said. "My wife in both cases. I'm as sure that she's a saint as I'm sure that you are."

"That's wonderful. I'll meet her someday. Get on my back now."

Teresa gave Duffey a piggy-back ride, and she carried him all around the little room and into the big thrice-special dining room.

"Oh, Teresa, I see that you and Mr. Duffey have become good friends," her father said with pleasure.

"Isn't she wonderful, Duffey!" Monica Murray Stranahan spoke happily. "I was afraid that you two most extraordinary persons I have ever known might not adjust right away, but you mesh perfectly."

And yet this girl Teresa had wonderful things in her that are deeper than the ocean and higher than the sky.

"How do you want them cooked?" a waitress asked him.

"What, what, is there more than one way to cook an oyster?" the big-nosed kid asked with a touch of alarm. "I've worked in a dozen oyster bars and I never knew there was more than one way."

"Where are you from, lad?" called a big man who was probably the proprietor.

"From New Orleans."

"Give him a hundred New Orleans style oysters," the man ordered.

"Now wasn't that simple," Duffey laughed as he sat down at the big table across from the big-nosed kid.

"Oh, I hardly knew you," the kid said. "Did you suddenly get better-looking in the middle of the night last night?"

"Yes I did, through a certain saintly intercession that I don't completely understand. What Irish hero was it who ate one hundred oysters each of them bigger than a wagon wheel? It was one of the heroic labors he had to perform. Was it Finn McCool? Are you Finn McCool incognito?"

"No, I'm Finn McCool openly. But that was long ago."

"Who else are you, Finn, and what are all the things in your pockets?"

"I'll show you," the kid said, "though I don't understand your getting so much better-looking in the middle of the night. It isn't a case of overweening vanity you've suddenly developed, is it? You are an art dealer among other things. What do you think of this?"

"Mm mm, I don't think. I know. It's an original Van Ghi. Where did you get it?"

"I painted it, of course. I'm Van Ghi."

"No, you're not. You're Finnegan. I don't see how you can stretch far enough to be Van Ghi, the least known painter of the best known

pictures currently appearing in the country. Who else are you, Finn?"

Finnegan took big bundle after big bundle out of his pockets and they were all magic bundles, absolutely magic. The one hundred oysters began to arrive then. The eating of them was one of the heroic labors assigned to Finnegan as Irish hero, yes. But before Finnegan had been an Irish hero, several thousand years before, Finnegan had been Iason and Odysseus and others.

"This one here, Finnegan, has to be out of the future," Duffey commented as he held another very large painting. "I am familiar with the style of Van Ghi, of yourself. He, you, haven't come nearly this far yet. It's something you might be able to do ten years from now. When did you paint it, or when will you paint it?"

"Oh, I don't know. It's a bothersome mystery to me. But keep it for me. I believe it will acquire meaning as the years go by."

"My universe is about complete again, Finnegan. The circle is nearly full. The two foci are almost in place. You are one of them."

"A universe with only two foci is like a stool with only two legs. It can't stand by itself."

"But a metaphor with only two foci can stand by itself, and a universe has to be a metaphor before it is a reality."

"All right. I'm one foci. Who's the other?"

"Teresa Piccone, soon to be Teresa Stranahan."

"No, no, no, impossible. You don't understand your own jumble, Duffey, because the affair of myself and Teresa isn't any part of your jumble. Our interval is completely outside of time. It's an isolated happening. It was an alternate that was not used, a discard, a wonderful discard."

"Possibly, Finnegan, since I don't know at all what you're talking about. Nevertheless, you two are the two foci of the coming reanimation of my universe. We will see."

"I bet we won't."

"Finnegan, my universe will soon be complete again. And, by a paradox which I don't quite understand, it has always been complete."

The hundred oysters were all gone. With the help of a few new and kind friends, they had all been eaten. Finnegan left Duffey for a while then. And Duffey recalled what somebody (probably Stein) had said of Finnegan once:

"You could skin Finnegan and throw his pelt into the corner, and it would still crackle with aura and smoke with essence. But you couldn't find all his essence bottled in one place."

Again, as when Duffey met Teresa for the first time, there seemed to be small earthquakes. Finnegan and Teresa both knew that these were time-quakes however. The past and present and future times were all mixed up ridiculously. Again they both came to the meeting

with trepidation that was made up of equal parts of awe and delight. But the difficulty was more serious than in the case of Duffey and Teresa. Between Teresa and Finnegan there was a wrenching enormity. Finnegan had tried to explain this to Duffey on oyster morning, that it was an alternate happening, a happening clear outside of normal time, possibly a rejected happening that had been left on the cutting-room floor and could not appear in the final version of the world scenario. But Finnegan could not find any way to tell this to the comparatively innocent ears of Melchisedech Duffey.

Well, in what was possibly an alternate and unaccepted version of things, Finnegan and Teresa had been acquainted. In fact they had been married for twelve years. They had an intense and mostly happy life in those twelve years. They'd had wonderful children. They had lived in grace and joy. They compared their memories of those twelve years now, and their memories agreed all the way to the oil-cloth on that little kitchen table to the broken back step off the back porch of the house.

But there was no room for those twelve years in any chronology. Teresa was just twenty-two and a half years old now. She remembered clearly at least every day of the last twenty years of that time. And there were countless people who remembered the lively Teresa, the daughter of the Show-man who ran the Star and Garter Burlesque Theatre. Teresa was everywhere, she knew everybody, she was known. There was no room in her life for those twelve years with Finnegan.

Finnegan was somewhat older and much more of a wanderer, but he had a good memory of all his years and adventures.

There was no room for those twelve years, but neither of them wanted to give them up. Those years had been crammed with a love unlike any other love ever. Not to be equaled.

Well, how had that period ended in the memories of the two of them? Oh, the memories of the two of them had simply ended after twelve years of it. But it still might be going on in some other time, as wonderful as ever.

"Finnegan, a thing like ours could destroy Melchisedech's World and leave it in total wreckage," Teresa complained. "How do we get around that?"

"I think we have it backwards, Teresa. I believe that Melchisedech's World is shot through with such anomalies. Haven't you had the feeling, again and again, that not all the Duffeys are as contemporary with each other as they seem? One at least of those I confabbed with during the last two days is dead, but he doesn't seem dead. He is merely living in a past where he is still alive. Another of our close-knit group was killed in New Guinea during the war, and yet

I talked with him less than an hour ago. Of course he's a ghost, but he's a convincing ghost, and I don't know whether or not he realizes that he is a ghost. Overseas, in the war in the South Pacific, we had a group that called ourselves, and was called THE SLEAZY SEVEN. But only five of us returned from that war. All seven of us are here at this confab though, five of us mostly alive, two of us a little bit less so. And Duffey himself (Oh Duffey Himself!) is mostly made up of a long series of 'seven lost years'. Shall we play it that way, Teresa? It's as good a way as any to play it, isn't it?"

"It's too funny not to play it that way, Finn. I'm all for it. But will our accepting it as that way make it that way?"

"To some extent, Teresa. It'll help. If wanting things to be some way didn't help them to be that way, then there wouldn't be much left to Melchisedech's World, or to the generally accepted world either."

"Now, Finnegan, since we agree that it's funny, let's have a fun-fest for a few minutes. The night before last I got Duffey to sit on my saintly lap and ride on my saintly back. I really am a saint, you know."

"During the twelve years you certainly were. And I'm sure that you are in the present time. You were and are a hilarious saint."

"Let's have a little hilarity then. Sit on my lap, Finn, and then bounce on my torso. I have the bounciest torso I know of. Oof, oof, oof, I love to have the wind bounced out of me like that. Oh, how the time does fly when you're having fun! We'd better go out and show them that we're all right." (This first meeting of Finnegan and Teresa took place in a room at the Stranahan's.)

Then Teresa burst out of that room with Finnegan riding on her shoulders and both of them whooping and in high good humour.

"Oh, isn't she wonderful, Finnegan!" Monica Murray Stranahan cried happily. "There seemed to be all sorts of storminess and apprehension when you two went into the room for your first meeting, but I'm delighted to see that you've come to perfect understanding with each other. Oh, I've never seen two more joyful people! Teresa, you're never so perfectly yourself as when you're giving a man a ride on your shoulders."

Teresa carried Finnegan through all of the rooms of the Stranahan Mansion and to every group of guests that was there.

And yet this girl Teresa really did have things in her that are deeper than the ocean and higher than the sky.

"Where the eagles are gathered together, there will I be also," Melchisedech Duffey said. The World of Melchisedech Duffey had many tendencies that Melchisedech himself didn't understand at all.

But the World of Melchisedech Duffey did begin its reanimation with that St. Louis Conclave, in spite of it being all full of errors of

time and space, in spite of erroneous names being used in several cases for the Persona of the Melchisedech World Drama. The reanimation began there, it found a validity in itself, and it is a living and growing world today.

‘Aren't the people of that so-called world pretty old by now?’

Some of them are old, some of them are dead and their places taken by others. But Hilarious Saints do not age as fast as other people do. Notice it sometime.

‘Can you not give me some corroborative proof that I can hold in my hand right now?’

You are holding the corroborative proof in your hand right now. It is what you have just been reading. The chapbook or brochure with the name ANAMNESIS exists only in the World According to Melchisedech Duffey. Really.

We defy you to find it in any of those minor alternative worlds.

Archipelago

*Book One of the
Devil is Dead Trilogy*

R.A. Lafferty



Books of Sand